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## DISCOURSE

Delivered at the General Conference of Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, October 4th, 1896, by

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I trust that the Latter-day Saints will exercise faith in behalf of those who address them. A congregation of people like those present, who have come together to worship the Lord have come doubtless with great desire that they may be fed the bread of life, and one would naturally be appalled at attempting to address a gathering of this size and character, unless he had the assurance that the Lord would help him. This hymn that we have just sung ("O, my Father, thou that dwellest," etc.) is full of meaning and inspires solemn thoughts. It seems to be almost a revelation of itself; (in fact, the grand truths which it contains were revealed through the Prophet Joseph) and while it was being sung, I thought how little mankind know of the truths which are embodied in those four verses of poetry. The Lord has been very kind and merciful unto His children in these latter days, in revealing the relationship which exists between Himself and the children of men, and in communicating some of His purposes in placing man here upon the earth. In this respect the Latter-day Saints, or those who have received the Gospel, have the advantage of the rest of mankind. While the scientific world and a large portion of the religious world are groping in dense darkness concerning the origin of man and the purpose of the Creator in placing him here, and while they are striving to arrive at some conclusion that will prove satisfactory, the Latter-day Saints possess knowledge concerning their origin. They do not believe that they have been evolved from some lower order of creation, nor that they have come on the earth by chance. If the Gospel did no more for us than this, what a great boon it would be, dispelling darkness and uncertainty and men's theories concerning the origin of man. And we could go on and touch upon a great many principles in like manner, concerning which the revelations of Jesus have given us knowledge and understanding.

The Latter-day Saints are in a position to progress and to become informed in every direction without having to stop to investigate the theories and views of men. The Lord has revealed with plainness and simplicity, accompanied by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, many things about which the world is in

doubt. Books have been written and years of time spent by learned men to establish what is called the Darwinian theory, while others have endeavored to combat that theory. It has disturbed the whole religious world. Many preachers of the Gospel have adopted this theory. The result is, infidelity has spread. Doubt has been thrown upon the Mosaic account of creation, the whole religious world has been agitated, and in many instances faith in the scriptures has been destroyed by this theory of the eminent philosopher, Charles Darwin. I suppose the majority of theologians who have been trained in the universities during the last quarter of a century, are inclined to look upon the Mosaic account of the creation as mythical in character. Men will try to show you—and apparently succeed—that this earth and its inhabitants have existed for a far longer period than the Bible warrants us in believing. Only a week or two ago it was published that some scientific man, in digging in the ruins of one of the ancient cities, found, as he claims, evidences that that city was in existence thousands of years before the biblical time of the creation of man. According to the chronology in the Bible, the Savior came about four thousand years after the placing of Adam on the earth; but this man of science says this city must have been in existence seven or eight thousand years before the birth of the Savior. He produces evidence of this in the form of pottery upon which the records of those days were kept, and which he has succeeded in deciphering. Other scientific men attempt to prove in different ways that the earth has been in existence long periods anterior to the time that those who believe in the Bible accept. They talk of the flint age, of the bronze age, of the iron age, etc., and try to prove from these things that the antiquity of man is far greater than the Bible chronology gives evidence of.

Had not the Lord given us revelation, confirmed by the gift of the Holy Ghost, what a condition we would have been in as well as the rest of mankind! How we would have been agitated and left a prey to doubt and uncertainty concerning these vital truths! But the Lord has given unto us evidences that are indisputable. He has given unto us the Bible, which has come down from the Jews. He has corroborated that by the revelation of the Book of Mormon. One, though translated by the learning of man, contains many precious truths; and the other has been translated by the power of God. There is no other book that it is claimed has been translated by the power of God, but the Book of Mormon. This has come to us pure and authentic, and we can rely upon its

testimony. In addition to these books, we have the revelations of the Lord to this Church contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. These three witnesses agree. President Woodruff used a very happy and expressive phrase this morning when he said that this dispensation dovetailed into the former dispensations. So with these books. They dovetail into each other, and they form a combination that cannot be broken, because they agree exactly. Every truth harmonizes with every other truth, and there is no conflict between them.

This people are exceedingly happy in having possession of these indisputable evidences concerning such important subjects. Do the Latter-day Saints believe that they have ascended or been evolved from a lower order of creation? No; for God has revealed to this Church that we are His children, made in His image, and possessing the gifts and attributes of God—not in their perfection, not in their developed condition, but possessing them nevertheless. We have these Godlike powers and attributes. We have descended from God, and can claim our parentage from Him, as much as our children can claim their parentage from us. Men may have lived in a low condition. The evidences of this can be produced. It can be proved that men fell from their high estate, and that in many instances they have lived in degradation, just as the Lamanites have descended to their low estate. But we know, from the record that God has given to us, the causes that have produced this. We know that the Lamanites were once a noble race of people. But through centuries of wrong-doing they have become degraded and low. This has been the case with many races. Our own ancestors have been in this condition, if we trace back far enough. Originally, however, man stood in the presence of his Maker, and his Maker recognized him as His son. He bestowed upon man blessings such as One so exalted would naturally bestow upon His offspring. But there was another power at work. Satan, who rebelled against God and sought to destroy the purposes of Jehovah, spread abroad his baneful influences, and these evil influences have had to be contended with through all the generations of men until the present time.

You can see, my brethren and sisters, the advantage that we possess in having the truth revealed to us. It ought to be the aim of our lives to preserve that truth, and to teach it to our children, that they may be the custodians of it and preserve it from the false ideas and vain philosophy that are being so industriously propagated at the present time in the highest institutions of learning in