



Type: General Conference

Untitled Talk (9 April 1933)

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

Source: *The One-Hundred and Third Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

Published: Salt Lake City; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,
1933

Page(s): 115-120

Abstract: The United States of America is a choice land. There are two great prophecies in the Book of Mormon: it is a witness of the divinity of Christ, and it gives prophecies concerning the great gentile nation. If the Gentiles sin against the gospel, it shall be taken from among them. But if they will repent, they shall be numbered among his people.

enormous sums of money it can command. More than fifty millionaires are reported to have membership in it. Many millions of dollars have been spent in its work. Why? Because if beer and other alcoholic beverages can be taxed and large revenues secured from this source, the rich will pay smaller income and corporation taxes. One rich man said the taxes on liquor would save one of his companies alone ten million dollars a year in corporation taxes. And his family have several large corporations. "Yes, let us have beer and repeal the 18th Amendment," cry the rich propagandists. "Why? Because this will shift huge taxes from our shoulders" to the backs of the working people of America, a fact that workers apparently have not yet recognized.

Yes, I repeat, brazen selfishness is the chief motive back of most repeal propaganda. Against all such I lift my voice. I stand for the 18th Amendment and against its repeal. Would that every member of the Church and every citizen stood with me. Does any one think the Lord will be pleased with us if by any act of ours we allow evil to come nearer to our doors?

In closing I again call to repentance and proclaim aloud, "that the coming of a brighter and a happier day" is dependent upon our living the Golden Rule and acknowledging Jesus Christ as our Savior.

The Lord help us so to do I pray in the name of our Redeemer, Amen.

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

Of the First Council of Seventy

Sometime about the middle of March I took note that the governor of this state issued a proclamation to the citizens thereof, appointing a day, the 12th of March, if I remember right, on which the churches of the state were asked to hold special services of a rather patriotic nature, giving voice and prayer to convictions and ideas that would be uplifting, to establish confidence in our nation, and to entreat the favor of God towards it. I think there was quite a general response to that proclamation, as indeed there ought to be to such proclamations, whether by the presidents of our country or the governors of our state, in such matters as thanksgiving days, and if necessary, days of fasting and of seeking any special favors of God.

It is peculiarly fitting that a people who profess, as an article of their faith: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates; in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law"—to such a people it is highly fitting that heed be given to the announcement made for reverence in our feelings and faith toward God. I visited some stakes in the Church, however, where circumstances, which I suppose were beyond control, did not admit of giving heed to this proclamation of our governor, a man in every way worthy of our confidence, and worthy of our confidence in his sincerity and his faith when making such a proclamation as the one I refer to—and I speak somewhat understandingly, because I have known him from his boyhood, and know the value and virtue of his life.

I am wondering if just a word might not be spoken here, at this General Conference, that would be fitting and proper, to recall his proclamation and the purpose of it, even though we may have to do so hurriedly. I think, perhaps, that would be as good a contribution as I could make to this conference session. Especially do I believe that because I think that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints occupies a certain "pride of place" in connection with a knowledge of the terms upon which the prosperity and the redemption of this nation rest.

I remember to have read in the Book of Mormon certain passages that bear upon this thought. We are told in that precious volume of scripture that when the floods receded from this land it became a very choice land unto the Lord, a land that, through this word of the Lord from the Nephite race, receives its most precious descriptive name. At any rate, this was the decree: "After the waters had receded from off the face of this land, it became a *choice land above all other lands*, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof."

This is recorded in the Book of Ether, which Moroni translated and added to the compilation made by his father. And further it is said—and this information was first imparted unto the Nephites—as I remember it, Brother Ivins quoted part of it—that all those who should come to this land should be brought of the Lord; that it was a choice land in which should be assembled those whom God would lead, by the inspiration of his Spirit, unto this land. This truth was especially made known unto the Jaredites, and stands as follows—that if they kept not the commandments of God they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them:

"And now, we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity. * * *

"Wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. * * *

"And this cometh"—

And this, by the way, is the comment of Moroni upon this fact which had been brought vividly before him from the Jaredite record. Now, he makes a very wonderful contribution in this comment:

"And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done."

Now, of course, Moroni, in making this comment, had before him the vivid recollection of the destruction of the Jaredites to the last man, and he had before him also the destruction of the Nephites, with the exception of a few who had fled to the land southward. Hence these lessons, so vividly before him, warranted him in sounding this note of warning unto the great Gentile nation that was to occupy this choice land in the last days, the land choice above all other lands.

"That ye may repent," he continues, "and not continue in your iniquities until

the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done.

“Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, *who is Jesus Christ*, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.”

Then again, there are two great prophecies in the Book of Mormon, and I think after the witness which the Book of Mormon bears to the divinity of the Christ, affirming that he is the Son of God, and after affirming that he is the Savior of the world, and after bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel—then I think that this new American witness for God has its next important item in the fact that it lays down these prophecies concerning the great Gentile nation that should rise and which would scatter the children of Israel upon the face of the land, and yet, afterwards, be touched by the spirit of pity and concern which would lead them to seek the preservation of the inhabitants of the land; that the seed of Joseph, so wonderfully gathered here and developed into a multitude of nations, should not be utterly destroyed, but should be preserved, and that, too, by this great nation that should be such an instrument in scattering them in the earth. The promises of the Lord in respect to these things are very wonderful and make the Book of Mormon one of the most valuable books that has ever been preserved, even as holy scripture.

This is said in regard to the above nation, which constitutes the first prophecy, namely:

“Thou beholdest that the Gentiles who have gone forth out of captivity, and have been lifted up by the power of God above *all other nations, upon the face of the land* which is choice above all other lands, * * * thou seest that the Lord will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren.”

So there was this prediction. Now, of course, perhaps the world will not admit that this was a prophecy uttered some six hundred years before the coming of the Christ upon this land; but it must be inevitably conceded that these words are prophetic, because they were uttered in 1830, when the Book of Mormon was published. At that time, of course, the Gentile nation here under the government of the United States numbered but about thirty millions; and now, behold, the great Gentile nation has become so increased in numbers and in power that there are perhaps nearly a hundred and thirty millions that constitute the citizens of the United States.

As for its power and dominion above all other nations of the earth, it has become somewhat customary to speak of America, but we generally mean the United States of America. Some of the Latin American republics take exception to this assumption of supreme domination in the western world, and demur from such homage being given to the United States. But nevertheless it is a fact which exists, and the dominating political power, the master spirit and dominant power in a political way, is this Anglo-Saxon republic known as the United States of America.

That nation alone was competent to state the great Monroe Doctrine, to the effect that these continents were closed to the establishment of the political systems of Europe, and they could not attempt to introduce such systems as theirs in this country, without giving offense to the United States of America; and behind the utterance was the necessary force to maintain such a declaration; it was inherent in the great Anglo-Saxon republic of this country.

The above is one prediction of the rise of a great nation that should be the greatest nation upon the face of this choice land. But that is only part of the prophecy. During the time that Jesus Christ visited this promised land he gave an utterance in regard to this matter that is extremely important. I want to read to you his words, the choicest words that can be spoken in relation to the land, and which join in the music from the inspiration of God, under which these, my brethren, have been speaking to you, in relation to the deliverance from distressing problems and disastrous circumstances into which we have been plunged. The Christ makes this declaration—the resurrected Christ, while ministering among the Nephites:

“And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled”—

and I ask you to note especially this list of American sins—

“— shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all those things, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them.”

I think possibly it could be held as true that they did that when the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were expatriated from Illinois and finally from the United States itself, and had to come to this high mountain valley, then the territory of the republic of Mexico. But mark this:

“And then I will remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them:

“And I will show unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you; but I will remember my covenant unto you O, house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fulness of my gospel.”

“But IF”—I wish to emphasize this—“But IF the Gentiles will repent and return unto me, saith the Father, behold they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel.

“And I will not suffer my people, who are of the house of Israel, to go through among them, and tread them down, saith the Father.

“But IF they will not turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, I will suffer them, yea, I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down, and they shall be as salt that hath lost its savor.”

There is not time for me to dwell more at large upon these things, but I think I have before you now the word of the Lord sufficiently to

cooperate with the declaration that has been made here, that though the great Gentile nation shall commit that long list of very serious and grievous sins, still *if they will repent* they shall have lot and part with the people of the Lord in building up Zion and accomplishing the purposes of the Lord. That is the great truth that I wish to emphasize in my remarks, and that we may have hope, under these teachings of the Son of God, for the great Gentile nation upon this land.

I believe that it is our duty and responsibility to sound this note of warning, and point out the way of escape: that if the nation that inhabits this land will hold its place by adhering to the things of God, and by doing his will and honoring the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, the nation can be preserved. The scriptures definitely say so.

Now, I ask myself of late: How far is the great Gentile nation honoring the God of the land? Well, there is much in their favor in that respect. I look down the line of that splendid list of men who have been the presidents of the United States, and the most of them may have claim upon faith in Christ, faith in the Christian religion. They may not have been devoted as partisans to this church or to that church, but they have had broad-minded views and have felt the necessity of honoring the God of this land in their faith and in their actions.

While listening to the inauguration-day proceedings of our present President of the United States, I felt a thrill of happiness go through me when I found him, on his way to pick up President Hoover to go to the inaugural ceremonies, stopping to visit his church, to approach its altar and remember God in prayer.

I was happy when I heard the proceedings in the House of Representatives, and found that a prayer—and I believe an earnest, Christian prayer—was offered up in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. And I was still happier when I heard the President, in his inaugural address, admonish the people to have faith in God and to trust in him, and pray that the people might be guided by the inspiration of the Lord; and especially when he said, near the close of his remarks, that he prayed that “God would guide him in the days to come.”

Now, all these circumstances are hopeful. There is still faith in this great people that God has raised up upon this land to direct in the civil affairs of men. I think sometimes when I read those great words in the Declaration of Independence, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that truly and really the law of the Lord is going forth from Zion as the word of the Lord—even the word of him that is the Word that was in the beginning with God, and that was God, and that was made flesh and dwelt among men, where men could behold his grace and his power, the Lord Jesus Christ—went forth from Jerusalem.

My brethren and sisters, I think we have reason to hope for our nation. I believe the testimony of President Ivins to be true, that we have a God-established government here, and also under its protecting aegis we have the Church of Jesus Christ established in the fulness of time, for the last time, to bring to pass the purposes of God in the salvation of men.

I see a beautiful unity in these things found in the Book of Mormon and the testimonies to which we have listened during this conference. I think we have the right to lift up the drooping hand, and to speak the word of encouragement to the people of the United States, and chiefly for this reason, that neither the government of the United States, in its achievements and in its character of great leadership, nor the Church, has yet reached the climax of those things for which they were established. So my faith is that we have a right to expect recovery and renewal of faith with God, and fellowship with him; for we still bow the knee and still proclaim that Jesus is the Christ, the God of this land and of all the earth. And as long as that is our national attitude, I believe that the light of hope is not obliterated.

I pray God to bless the nation, to bless the Church, and all that pertains to it, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

I feel that we owe a very deep debt of gratitude to Evan Stephens, George Careless, Joseph J. Daynes, Ebenezer Beesley and others who have written beautiful music for us. I am free to confess that when I go out into the country districts and hear sung certain anthems, I wonder why the people do not show preference for the home-made article. I think that Evan Stephens and these other men were inspired of the Lord to write music for us. I do not want to reflect on any of the magnificent things that have been written by others, but I have gone to many a conference where I have listened to anthems when I would rather have heard a good Latter-day Saint hymn sung.

An anthem, "Grant us Peace," was sung by the Choir.

ELDER LEVI EDGAR YOUNG

Of the First Council of Seventy

My brethren and sisters: As I have sat on the stand here and looked into your faces, the past day or two, I have been built up in spirit and in truth. I realize the fineness and the honesty of the brethren who hold the priesthood of God.

This is a time of much trial and sorrow. The greatest need today is that human hearts shall find comfort, and I believe you have found comfort in coming up to this holy tabernacle of God, where one hears the word of God. Men need encouragement; they need divine light and understanding. They need to see those "divine truths that come of the Eternal Father in the name of Christ," as a prophet of old once said. And this American prophet further said:

"If ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things."

Do we believe and understand these divine words? Jesus once said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Do we