

that want to hear and to learn of it, that it may be a blessing and a benefit to us and to the human family; that the work of the Lord may go on and prosper, increase and spread abroad until the Gospel has gone to all nations, and until all the ends of the earth shall be made to know that He is God, and that there is none else in the earth like unto Him. And may His blessings be upon us, and upon all we have to do with—our persons, our families, our flocks, our herds, our gardens and our orchards, and all that the Lord hath made us the stewards over, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON.

Prophetic promises concerning the land of America and its people—It is choice above all other lands—Designs of God in regard to it—Law in relation to war—Course of the government of our nation commended—Our duty to our country.

The remarks which have been made by Brother Franklin D. Richards concerning the position the inhabitants of the earth are in, and particularly our position, and his reference to the revelation that was read the other day concerning the necessity there would be for those who desired peace to flee to Zion, suggests the reading of some promises and predictions that the Lord has made concerning this land. Lehi, before his death, in speaking about this land to which he and his family had been led, made the following remarks:

"Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve Him according to the commandment which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound, cursed shall be the land for their sakes; but unto the righteous it shall be blessed for ever."

His son Jacob also spoke concerning this land, and those who had charge of the records have left on record something that He has said respecting it:

"But behold, this land, saith God, shall be a land of thine inheritance, and the Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land.

"And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall

be no kings upon the land, who shall rise up unto the Gentiles;

"And I will fortify this land against all other nations."

Here is a promise given to the people of this land, that if we will serve the God of this land no nation shall prevail against us; for the Lord says he will fortify this land against all other nations. Of course, it is understood that to have this we must be a righteous nation.

Other prophets have spoken in similar language. It is recorded by Moroni, in the book of Ether, as follows:

"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;

For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God, or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of this land, that they are swept off.

"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 hath 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."

These are great promises which the Lord has given unto the inhabitants of this land; not to the Latter-day Saints alone, but to all the people of the land. You remember, no doubt, the effort that was made to establish a king on this land of North America, and the destruction which resulted to many of those who attempted it. The word of God as recorded in this Book of Mormon, which was revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith,

concerning the results of any attempt to set up a king on this land, was literally fulfilled in that instance. Maximillian was destroyed, and the attempt to establish an empire was brought to naught. The Mexican people, inspired with a grand patriotism and an intense love for country, rose up, led by a pure descendant of Lehi—a pure Lamanite—and overthrew the armies of Europe that were brought here to conquer the land and to establish upon this sacred soil—this soil dedicated by the Almighty to liberty and freedom—an empire. The flower of the French army, and most distinguished of her generals, with the Emperor Napoleon himself as the designer of the enterprise, backed and sustained by Austria, were ignominiously overthrown and brought to shame and confusion. The Lord fulfilled His word exactly as it had been predicted long before. Upwards of six hundred years before the birth of the Savior Ether, a Prophet of God, had made predictions concerning this land. Not long after that Lehi made similar predictions. Shortly after that Jacob, a Prophet of God, made predictions concerning the fate of those who should attempt to bring the inhabitants of this land into bondage, and he said that no king should be established upon the land. So that we have on record great predictions by these three men of God concerning the future of America. This is a sacred land. It is a land choice above all other lands upon the face of the earth. It was kept hidden from the nations for long centuries, and the reason for this has been given to us; it was that the land might not be overrun by the nations of the earth, and that it might be reserved for the great drama of the last days.

It is a remarkable thing, and we would be incapable of understanding the reason why this land had been hidden for so many centuries from the knowledge of the nations of the earth, if the Lord had not revealed it. There is said to be a record among the Scandianvians that some of that race penetrated the western sea and landed on the coast of North America. This may or may not be so. The Welsh also claim that a prince of their blood also reached this land. The

Irish also have a tradition that some of their race penetrated the western ocean and reached the land. But whoever did this, if any, left nothing on record to incite the nations of the earth to the belief that there lay hidden, enveloped in the mists of the western sea, a large hemisphere such as the continent of North and South America. The knowledge of it was completely hidden, as completely as if it did not belong to our globe. Navigators sailed to and fro; but through the long centuries that elapsed from the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel, when the inhabitants of the earth were scattered, until the time that Columbus, inspired of God, went from court to court, pleading with the governments of nations to give him the means to penetrate the ocean and find what he supposed was the Indies—during all that time the knowledge of this land was kept from all the nations of the earth. Is not this wonderful? How can we account for it? There is only one way, and that is the way the Lord accounts for it; He tells us through His servant that the knowledge of this land should be kept from all the nations of the earth, because if it were not they would overrun the land. It was a land too choice to be left unoccupied, possessed of too many of those elements that enrich individuals and peoples. The nations of the earth would have swarmed here by the hundreds of thousands, and there would have been no place found upon the land for the great events that are taking place now and for the people who now possess the land. There would have been no room for the Church of Christ, no room for the kingdom of God, no room for the gathering of the millions that will yet come to Zion, to build up the kingdom of God on this land and to prepare the way for the establishment of the New Jerusalem; for this is the favored land upon which the New Jerusalem will be established. We, therefore, can see today how the Lord has prepared the way for the gathering of the people from all the nations of the earth, and how His providence has been over this choice land above all other lands. There is plenty of room here; not crowding upon anybody; not compelled to come as conquerors have in

other ages who have overrun other lands and driven out or destroyed the people who occupied the land, in order that they might possess it. No necessity for this; for God has made abundant provisions. He has kept in reserve this glorious land, in order that in the last days His kingdom could be established, and that under the inspiration which He should give, a government might be founded—a government of liberty, a government of freedom, giving to all the utmost liberty they could desire, and promising to those who should possess the land many precious things; for He has told us that none should be brought here except they should come by His permission. Therefore, the emigration that has come from the beginning, and that is still coming, comes by the permission of the Almighty. He is watching over it, and He will control it and bring to pass His purposes in connection with it. He has told us that if we will only worship the God of this land, Jesus Christ, we cannot be brought into bondage or into captivity by any other nation. The powers of Europe may band together and indulge in hopes of conquering this nation; but the Lord has said—and it will be fulfilled if we do right—that they will be defeated in all their schemes, and this shall be a land of liberty unto the righteous. This nation of ours, so glorious in its past, so glorious in its prospects of the future, will stand and never be overthrown, unless the inhabitants of the land reject Jesus Christ, the King and the God of the land. Now we know the conditions upon which victory will be assured to us as a nation. If this nation had listened to Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God; if they had been counseled by him, God would have adopted this nation and its government, and made it His; for the promises are to that effect. Now, what the future will be depends upon the conduct of those who possess the land and upon the administration of affairs in the land.

There is one thing that has gladdened me very much during this recent agitation concerning war; I have been pleased exceedingly at the course that has been taken by the administration in this threatened difficulty.

There has been so manifest a desire and determination on the part of President McKinley and those immediately connected with him, to keep down excitement, to prevent the circulation of falsehood and everything that would disturb the public mind and inflame it against Spain, that I have been very much pleased.

In connection with this I would like to read a revelation which the Lord has given to us as a people, because I see in the conduct of the administration some features that agree with the instructions of the Lord. The Lord, in speaking about the plan that He recommended to His ancients, says:

"Behold, this is the law I gave unto my servant Nephi, and thy fathers Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, and all mine ancient Prophets and Apostles.

"And again, this is the law that I gave unto mine ancients, that they should not go out unto battle against any nation, kindred, tongue, or people, save I, the Lord, commanded them.

Here is a law given that is of the utmost importance to the inhabitants of the earth, as well as to us as a people. It is the law by which the inhabitants of the earth should be governed, and we, as Latter-day Saints especially, should understand this law and be governed by it; and not, as we have been told at this Conference, indulge in warlike demonstrations or manifest a bloodthirsty disposition. We should be a peaceful people, seeking peace, and endeavoring to escape all the horrors of war, and to avert them from the nations of the earth, particularly our own nation. The Lord says:

"And if any nation, tongue, or people, should proclaim war against them, they should first lift a standard of peace unto that people, nation, or tongue."

I have been impressed (and I say this aside from any political bias, not wishing political feeling to enter into a question of this kind) with the conduct of the administration in relation to this. There has seemed to me to be a determination on the part of President McKinley and those immediately associated with him to push off war and to do all in their power to avert it. Because of their apparent hesitation

some have become inflamed against them, and have felt that the dignity of the nation was not being maintained, and that we were not doing as we should do to punish Spain for her supposed action in relation to the destruction of the battleship *Maine*, and because of her treatment of the Cubans. The feelings of our nation have been stirred up by reports in the newspapers, many of which have been incorrect and without foundation. While the examination concerning the destruction of the *Maine* was going on, the administration has been under the continued necessity of publicly denying the false stories that had obtained circulation; and they did this in the interests of peace, to keep the people of our nation from being misled and stirred up to such a degree of indignation that they could not be controlled. I have admired this, and I have thanked God that this spirit has been given unto the men that have our nation and its affairs in charge, because I have recognized how much it agreed with what the Lord has said. Spain has not yet proclaimed war against this nation; but if she has countenanced (which I do not believe she did) the destruction of the battleship *Maine*, or even if the ruling powers in Spain have done it, and were determined to have war with us, the Lord says we should lift up a standard of peace unto that nation. That is the duty of this nation. That is the duty of the Latter-day Saints, when their enemies come against them to make war upon them. We must proclaim peace; do all in our power to appease the wrath of our enemies; make any sacrifice that honorable people can to avert war, with all its horrors, entailing as it does dreadful consequences so numerous that they cannot be mentioned. It is our duty, I say, as a nation. The influence of the Latter-day Saints should be used in this direction. We should seek to quell these feelings of anxiety to fight and to shed blood. Our influence should go forth like oil poured upon the troubled waters, quieting the waves of discontent and wrath that are aroused by this fearful spirit. The Lord then tells us what should be done:

"And if that people did not accept the offering of peace neither the second nor the third time,"

Not only ought we to extend the offering of peace the first time to a nation that proclaims war against us, but again the second time; and if that should be rejected, again the third time; and if it be rejected the third time, then

"They should bring these testimonies before the Lord."

Go to the Lord, and say, "Here are our testimonies. We have offered peace the first time; we have offered it twice; we have offered it three times; but our offerings are rejected, and this nation is determined to have war with us. Now we bring these testimonies before thee, Lord."

"Then I, the Lord, would give unto them a commandment, and justify them in going out to battle against that nation, tongue, or people,

"And I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children's battles, and their children's children's, until they had avenged themselves on all their enemies, to the third and fourth generation.

"Behold, this is an ensample unto all people, saith the Lord your God, for justification before me.

I do not look for our nation to do this. It is scarcely to be expected, in the nature of things, that they would do it. But it is the true principle, and we as a people should use our influence for this purpose. Our prayers should ascend to God; our petitions should ascend to the government of our nation to do everything that honorable people can to avert war. We have no fear of the effect of the combinations against us. Spain might inflict great damage upon our coasts. Her naval strength is equal if not superior to ours. We have a very extended line of seacoast, and a difficult line to defend against a strong naval power. And we might suffer in the beginning. But the promise of God is that if we will do right as a nation, if we will serve Him, they shall not have power over us, or be able to bring us into bondage; and in the end we shall prevail. This is a glorious promise which is made to the inhabitants of this land. I would to God

that the whole nation would believe it. I would to God that they would accept the testimonies of the past, the prophecies that have been referred to this afternoon; for I say to you, as I would like to say to this entire nation, there are prophets of God in the land. The word of God is in the midst of the people. The Lord reveals His mind and will unto His servants the Prophets. The proofs of it are before all the nations of the earth. There is abundant evidence to substantiate the statements which have been made that the Lord has revealed His will, and that there are Prophets in the land. And if the nation would believe, the Lord would make them the great and mighty power that we are told by the ancient Prophets this nation might become.

To us as Latter-day Saints these principles are of the utmost importance. I do not want to see our young men get filled with the spirit of war and be eager for the conflict. God forbid that such a spirit should prevail in our land, or that we should contribute in any manner to the propagation of a spirit of that kind! But one may say, "Is it not our duty to defend our country and our flag? Is it not our duty to maintain the institutions which the Lord has given to us?" Certainly it is. And it is no part of cowardice to take the plan that the Lord has pointed out. No man need be afraid that the Lord or any just man will look upon him as a coward.

There was a time when men who became angry at each other fought duels. A man of honor considered it his duty, if he received an insult, to challenge the insulter, and the man that was challenged had the choice of weapons, and they fought in single combat to avenge their honor. And such a feeling prevailed on this question that brave men were liable to be charged with cowardice if they did not fight. It took the bravest kind of men to refuse to fight. But it is not an evidence of true courage to be willing to rush into a fight. Sometimes the bravest of people shrink from any such action as this; when the time comes to fight, however, they are the bravest, and the slowest to yield.

The Lord has given us a command in connection with this subject that

is worth while for us to bear in mind:

"For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith;

"And whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name's sake, shall find it again, even life eternal:

"Therefore be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy."

In this revelation the Lord requires us to be a brave people, a true and faithful people. As one of our hymns says:

"We want no cowards in our band,
Who will our colors fly;
We call for valiant-hearted men,
Who're not afraid to die."

This is the kind of people that are wanted in the Church of Christ; not cowards, or men who will shirk and fly in the hour of danger. Such people are not wanted. At the same time the Lord expects us to be a peace-loving people, willing to do everything in our power for peace, to preserve the lives of the human family, to deliver every person, to the extent of our ability, from all the evils that Satan would bring upon them. Therefore, I hope if there is a disposition not to clamor for war that it will not be attributed to cowardice or to the fear of losing life. God has commanded us to be ready to lay down our lives whenever it shall be necessary. If it should be to defend our religion, we have in days past shown our fearlessness in that direction. Speaking generally, our people have not been afraid to lay down their lives for their religion. We should be equally willing, if it should be necessary, to lay down our lives for our country, for its institutions, for the preservation of its liberty, that these glorious blessings and privileges shall be preserved to all mankind, and especially to those with whom we are immediately connected. A man is of very little value that would not be willing to take the chances in a contest where these important interests were at stake; for these interests are of far more value than life itself. I believe that the day will come, or is here now, that if this

people called Latter-day Saints should be required to go to defend their country and its institutions, their homes and their religion, and the rights of their fellow-men, there would be an almost universal response in favor of that. Therefore, that which I say upon these points is not in favor of shrinking from the defense of everything that is right, or of doing anything that would be craven and unworthy of honorable people. I would not like to see our government put itself in a position that it would not stand fair before all the nations of the earth; and every effort that we make for peace will make us stand fair, because there is a feeling throughout the world that the American people are strong enough to be magnanimous, and that when they are magnanimous, it is not prompted by any craven or unworthy feeling.

Brethren and sisters, I have endeavored to lay before you some of the promises that God has made to us. I say "us," because we are inhabitants of this land and possessors in common with our fellow citizens. I have read this to you so that if you need comfort it may be imparted unto you. There need be no trepidation in our hearts concerning the threatening aspect of affairs. If war should come, it will no doubt come because of the determination of Spain to force it upon us. I feel confident that there is no disposition on the part of our own government, whatever may be the feeling of the masses of the people, to create war. The freedom of Cuba has nothing particularly to do with us, only this far: They are on our borders, and the atrocities which have been committed have been of so awful a character that we would be less than human if we did not sympathize with them. Our government is amply justified in demanding that these atrocities shall cease. We would be less than human if we could sit quietly by and see people massacred and starved to death as they have been and are being on the island of Cuba. It is not the newspaper correspondents alone who have brought these tidings to us; but men of the highest repute have told of the conditions there. I have myself had communications upon the subject from one of the leading

men in this nation, who visited Cuba personally. Of course, we all have seen what the newspapers have said. Under these circumstances, men and women who have the least feeling for their fellow creatures must cry out against the continued perpetration of such horrors, and the word should go forth that they must cease. We cannot allow a continuation of these scenes while we have the power as a nation to put an end to them. Then if Spain is determined, because of this position that we have assumed, to make war upon us, let us do the best we can under the circumstances. But I hope that Spain will see the folly of continuing this, and will give those poor, wretched people the liberty they are contending for.

I pray God the Eternal Father to be with us as a people, to fill us with sentiments of justice and mercy, with comprehensive views concerning our relationship to mankind in general, and the duties that devolve upon us because of our position. For I say to you this day that the Latter-day Saints, in some respects, occupy the most influential position of any people upon the face of the earth, according to our numbers. And our influence will be felt more and more, especially if we will only be united. It is our union that gives us power. Take that away from us and we are weak as water. But united, bound together in holiness, in purity, and in the love of liberty and of truth, we are the strongest people upon the face of the earth. God grant that this may continue, and increase, until all shall be fulfilled that has been spoken concerning Zion and this glorious land of ours. I ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF

Historical incidents—Keys of power from Joseph to the Twelve—Founders of our nation inspired—Afflictions awaiting the world—Importance of redeeming the dead.

At the close of this Conference I have a desire to bear my testimony before you upon a few principles. I have rejoiced very much during this Conference in listening to the testimony of the Apostles and Elders who have spoken. It has brought to my remembrance a little of my history.