

SECOND DAY.

In the Tabernacle, Saturday, Oct. 5, 1918, 10 a. m.

The congregation was called to order by President Joseph F. Smith.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn: "Come come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear."

Prayer was offered by Elder Joseph S. Geddes, president of the Oneida stake of Zion.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn: "Hail to the man who communed with Jehovah."

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

Why America was discovered—Columbus and the Western World—Not an accident—Nephi and the Land of Promise—What "Gentile" means—Lamanites or Indians—Discovery and colonization—The War for Independence—Material prosperity—America's future—Our Country's real glory—Fulfilling her mission.

The twelfth day of October, 1918, will be the four hundred and twenty-sixth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus, and the day has been set apart by proclamation of the President of the United States for general observance throughout the nation. It might not be amiss, at this general conference of the Church to anticipate that observance, in so far, at least, as to make reference to this great and illustrious event and to some of the issues that have grown out of it. I cannot hope to elaborate my theme; the time is too limited for that; but will give it to you in headlines, as Brother Roberts

would say, merely throwing out a few thoughts which you can clothe for yourselves at your leisure.

Columbus discovered America in the year 1492. He was not the first white man to tread the soil of the New World. Five hundred years before his time an Icelandic sailor, Lief Erickson, with a band of daring spirits, grounded keel on the shores of New England, named by him Vinland (Vine Land) from the wild grapes that grew there in profusion. They built a few huts, but did not make a permanent settlement, did not remain very long. Other Norsemen followed in their wake. But no tidings of these adventurous exploits had penetrated to the other European nations when Columbus started upon his great voyage.

Columbus believed that the earth was round, but he was not the first to entertain that theory. Sir John Mandeville, an English traveler, wrote a treatise upon the subject in 1356, long before Columbus was born, having become convinced of it by astronomical observations. That treatise is said to be "the very first English book that ever was written" (Ridpath's *History of the United States*, chapter 3). Most of the people of that time believed the earth to be flat or shaped like a cheese, and that one had but to sail westward a certain distance beyond the Pillars of Hercules—the Strait of Gibraltar—and he would come to "the slipping off place," and go down and be heard from no more. In the face of this terrible tradition, widely prevalent in that age, it took

some degree of courage and fortitude to set out for the unknown West. Columbus was one of a number of learned men who held that the earth was a sphere. While not the first to hold that theory, he was the first to put it into practice. He believed that he could reach India by sailing westward. Accordingly, he sailed for India, and found America on the way. [President Smith, *sotto voce*, from his seat behind the speaker: "He could hardly have missed it."] President Smith remarks that "he could hardly have missed it." (Laughter.) Landing on one of the Bahama Islands—San Salvador—Columbus supposed it to be the coast of India, and he never learned to the contrary so long as he lived on earth. That is why he called the natives "Indians."

The discovery of America was not an accident. The event had been fore-ordained in the eternal councils. The prophets of old had it in view. Jacob foresaw it when he blessed his son Joseph, calling him "a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall" [of waters] "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills" (Gen. 49: 22-26). Moses had it in prophetic vision when he blessed the tribes of Israel, making great and peculiar promises to the tribe of Joseph, whose land (America) was to be "precious" for the things of heaven and of earth, and whose descendants through Ephraim were to "push the people," the Lord's people, "together to the ends of the earth" (Deut. 33:13-17); a hint foreshadowing the gathering of Israel in the last days.

There was an American prophet named Nephi. He came from Jerusalem six hundred years before the birth of the Savior—came with his

father, Lehi, and an Israelitish colony, and both South and North America were eventually peopled by their descendants. Those who followed Nephi were known as Nephites, while a degenerate faction who had for their leader Nephi's brother Laman, were termed Lamanites. These were the ancestors of the American Indians. Nephi was shown by an angel the glorious future of this land, a land of promise, the land of Joseph, the land of Zion, the theatre of wonderful events in days that were to come. I shall now read to the congregation a portion of Nephi's vision of the future of America, and in order to avoid repetition and thus save time, will comment upon the several paragraphs as I proceed. First Nephi, thirteenth chapter:

"And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me, saying, Look! And I looked and beheld many nations and kingdoms.

"And the angel said unto me, What beholdest thou? And I said, I beheld many nations and kingdoms.

"And he said unto me, These are the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles."

The word "Gentiles" in the foregoing quotation refers to the peoples of Europe at the time of Columbus and the great discovery. Let me interject here that the word "Gentile," as we use it, is not intended as a term of reproach. The nickname "Mormon" was originally applied to the Latter-day Saints in derision. We are called "Mormons" because we believe in the Book of Mormon, from which I am reading. Mormon, a Nephite prophet, was the compiler of this record. But "Gentile" meant in ancient times "one of another nation or people." The great pro-

genitor of the Gentiles was Japheth, one of the three sons of Noah, by whom earth was re-peopled after the flood. Shem peopled Asia and became the ancestor of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, those great patriarchs of the chosen seed. Ham inhabited Africa; he was the father of the black races. From Japheth sprang the European nations, and it was to them that the angel referred in speaking to Nephi. The origin of the English word "Gentile" is in the Greek "Gentilis," which simply means of or pertaining to a nation or people not of the House of Israel. But let me read further:

"And it came to pass that I looked and beheld many waters; and they divided the Gentiles from the seed of my brethren.

"And it came to pass that the angel said unto me, Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren."

Here is meant the Lamanites, who were cursed for their iniquity with dark skins and benighted minds. They were the brethren of the Nephites, the seed or descendants of the rebellious brothers of Nephi, and by them the Nephites were destroyed about the year 420 A. D. "Many waters" describes the ocean dividing the American continents from the Eastern Hemisphere.

"And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren who were in the promised land."

I need not stop to say that this man was Christopher Columbus,

impelled by the Spirit of God to cross the deep, and thus build, as God's servants have always done, better than he knew.

"And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters."

This reference is to the Pilgrims or Puritans, who about the beginning of the Seventeenth century fled from England to Holland to escape religious persecution in their own land, and then returned to England and sailed for America, landing at Plymouth Rock in December, 1620. They were followed by many others. In fact, before the Puritans settled in Massachusetts, an English colony had settled in Virginia, where they founded Jamestown; and Huguenots from France, Cavaliers and Roundheads from England, with Scotch and Irish and German emigrants of all classes came flocking to North American shores, and were the elements of the great nation subsequently founded here.

"And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise; and I beheld the wrath of God, that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles and were smitten."

The history of the red man, pushed back by the white man landing in America, is too well known to require extended comment.

"And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, that they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain.

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them.

"And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters and upon the land also, to battle against them;

"And I beheld that the power of God was with them and also that the wrath of God was upon those that were gathered together against them to battle.

"And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations."

Thus is portrayed in brief the Revolutionary War, that heroic strife of the American colonies for freedom and independence, followed by the setting up of the Government of the United States, the greatest and best government that the sun shines on. Great are the promises of God concerning this nation, provided it be a righteous nation; for he says in other parts of this sacred book that he "will fortify this land against all other nations," that there shall be "no king upon this land," and that they "who fight against Zion shall perish."

I wish now to dwell upon another phase of the subject. How wonderfully the Gentiles have prospered upon this choice land. I feel that I cannot do better at this point than to read a few paragraphs from the writings of Dr. John Lord, showing how marvelously God has blessed America, and forecasting some of the great things that he intends yet to do for her. In the sixth volume of *Beacon Lights of History*, is a lecture entitled "Mar-

itime Discoveries." Therein that writer says:

"The discovery of America opened a new field for industry and enterprise to all the discontented and impoverished and oppressed Europeans who emigrated. At first they emigrated to dig silver and gold. * * * * Many were disappointed, and were obliged to turn agriculturists, as in Virginia. Many came to New England from political and religious motives. But all came to better their fortunes. Gradually the United States and Canada became populated from east to west and from north to south. The surplus population of Europe poured itself into the wilds of America. Generally the emigrants were farmers. With the growth of agricultural industry were developed commerce and manufactures. Thus, materially, the world was immensely benefited."

Dr. Lord then speaks of the future:

"There is no calculating the future resources and wealth of the New World, especially in the United States. There are no conceivable bounds to their future commerce, manufactures, and agricultural products. We can predict with certainty the rise of new cities, villas, palaces, material splendor, limited only to the increasing resources and population of the country. Who can tell the number of miles of new railroads yet to be made; the new inventions to abridge human labor; what great empires are destined to rise; what unknown forms of luxury will be found out; what new and magnificent trophies of art and science will gradually be seen; what mechanism, what material glories, are sure to come? This is not speculation. Nothing can retard the growth of America in material wealth and glory.

"And what then? * * * * The world has witnessed many powerful empires which have passed away and left 'not a rack behind.' What remains of the antediluvian world?—not even a spike of Noah's ark, larger and stronger than any modern ship.

What remains of Nineveh, of Babylon, of Thebes, of Tyre, of Carthage,—those great centers of wealth and power? What remains of Roman greatness even, except in laws and literature and renovated statues? * * * What is the simple story of all the ages?—industry, wealth, corruption, decay, and ruin. What conservative power has been strong enough to arrest the ruin of the nations of antiquity?

“Now if this is to be the destiny of America,—an unbounded material growth, followed by corruption and ruin,—then Columbus has simply extended the realm for men to try material experiments. Make New York second Carthage, and Boston a second Athens, and Philadelphia a second Antioch, and Washington a second Rome, and we simply repeat the old experiments.

“But has America no higher destiny than to repeat the old experiments and improve upon them and become rich and powerful? Has she no higher and nobler mission? If America has a great mission to declare and to fulfil, she must put forth altogether new forces, and these not material. *And these alone will save her and save the world.* * * * The real glory of America is to be something entirely different from that of which the ancients boasted. And this is to be moral and spiritual,—that which the ancients lacked.

“I cannot see that civilization gained anything, morally, by the discovery of America, until the new settlers were animated by other motives than a desire for sudden wealth. When the country became colonized by men who sought liberty to worship God,—men of lofty purposes, willing to undergo sufferings and danger in order to plant the seeds of a higher civilization,—then there arose new forms of social and political life. * * * An entirely new political organization was gradually formed, resting equally on such pillars as independent townships and independent States, and these represented by delegates in a national centre.

“So we believe America was discovered, not so much to furnish a field for indefinite material expansion,—but to introduce new forms of gov-

ernment, new social institutions, new customs and manners, new experiments in liberty, *new religious organizations.* * * * If America has a destiny to fulfill for other nations, she must give them something more valuable than reaping machines, palace cars, and horse railroads. She must give, not only machinery to abridge labor, but institutions and ideas to expand the mind and elevate the soul. * * * *Unless something new is born here, which has a peculiar power to save, wherein will America ultimately differ from other parts of Christendom?* * * * America is a glorious boon to civilization, but only as she fulfils *a new mission in history,—not to become more potent in material forces, but in those spiritual agencies which prevent corruption and decay.*”

I presume the learned author of those splendid words would stand appalled at the “presumption,” the seeming audacity of one who would stand up in a public assembly and announce to him and to all the world that this “something new”—new and yet old—having “a peculiar power to save,” HAS ALREADY COME, and that it lies at the very foundation of this work, God’s mighty and marvelous work of the last days. Yes, whatever men may think or say, this is our position. In the Everlasting Gospel and in the powers of the Eternal Priesthood, restored to earth through the instrumentality of a Prophet of God, in this the final dispensation of Gospel grace, are those “spiritual agencies which prevent corruption and decay,” “institutions and ideas to expand the mind and elevate the soul,” forces and powers which can alone save this nation and “save the world.”

The Latter-day Saints believe Columbus was inspired to discover this land in order that a free nation, dedicated to the maintenance and preservation of the rights of

man, including his right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, might arise here; a nation founded upon the proposition that all men have equal rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed—a doctrine diametrically opposed to the old autocratic notions prevalent in European and oriental lands. And we further believe that this nation was established so that the great work of Israel's God might come forth under its protecting ægis, and not be crushed out by the tyranny of man; to the end that the gospel, "the power of God unto salvation," might be preached in all the world as a witness before the end comes; that the House of Israel might be gathered in from their long dispersion, that Zion might arise, and the glory of God rest upon her, and the world be prepared for the coming of the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his glory. We believe this fervently. It is our message to the world.

America has fulfilled, or is fulfilling her high and noble mission. True, there have been some abuses, things that were never contemplated by the founders of our nation, by the signers of the immortal Declaration, by the framers of the glorious Constitution. Men have been persecuted under the Stars and Stripes for their religious convictions. But it was not the Constitution that did it; it was not the Declaration, not the Flag, that was responsible. These things occurred, not because of the Constitution, but in spite of it, and because the laws were not enforced for the protection of the weak against the strong. Yet we do not hold this against our

Government. We are willing to let bygones be bygones. America is fulfilling her mission despite such lapses; for she has fostered and in a sense brought forth the Church of God, which represents the lifting of the ensign for the gathering of scattered Israel. Under her protecting shield "the little stone" has come forth that is destined to become "a mountain" and fill the whole earth.

And we stand by our country, we are glad and proud to see her continuing the noble work that God has placed upon her. Even as Joseph of old, liberated from prison and exalted to a throne, ministered to his brethren who had hated him and cast him out and sold him into slavery, so this Land of Joseph, lifted up on high, enthroned in beauty and power and glory, is now ministering to the needy nations who come bending to her for food, for succor, for assistance. America, rediscovering herself, forgiving the past and magnanimously returning good for evil, has even crossed the ocean with her armies and navies and is sending her sons to the front to help the nations of Europe, the democracies of the Old World, fight the battle of freedom and equal right. And I thank God, for one, that our boys have the privilege of participating in this glorious strife. They are pre-eminently the sons of liberty, for the gospel covenant in which they were begotten and born, is liberty's perfect law, and it is most fitting and appropriate that they should play their part in the great and mighty drama that is fated to spread the principles of human freedom and clear the way for the carrying of the message of salvation into every nook and corner of the world.

God bless our country! God bless America in her heaven-appointed task of succoring the needy nations, of guarding the ark of liberty, keeping alive the fires of freedom, and maintaining the rights of man! Amen.

A duet: "The morning breaks, the shadows flee," was sung by David Reese and Anthony C. Lund.

ELDER DAVID O. McKAY.

A beautiful hymn and a significant prophecy—Necessity of considering the meaning of the Church of Christ—The change among the Jews regarding the Holy One of Israel—God will remember his promises—The Holy Land about to be restored to Judah—Responsibility upon the peoples of the earth regarding the gospel of Christ—What are the responsibilities of the Latter-day Saints?—An appeal to the youth of Zion to read the signs of the times, and to set an example of purity and chastity before the world—A striking illustration.

I was just wondering how many in this magnificent audience fully appreciate, or appreciate even to a slight degree, the significance of the third stanza of that beautiful hymn so inspiringly sung just now by these two elders. While the inspiration of their music is still thrilling our hearts, let me read:

The Gentile fulness now comes in,
And Israel's blessings are at hand:
Lo! Judah's remnant, cleansed from
 sin,
Shall in their promised Canaan stand.

And the next equally applicable:

Jehovah speaks! let earth give ear,
And Gentile nations turn and live;
His mighty arm is making bare,
His cov'nant people to receive.

Over two thousand years ago a

prophet on the American continent prophesied of the restoration of Israel to "their promised Canaan," and also of the land of America, the mission of which has been so eloquently explained to us by my brother, Elder Orson F. Whitney. If you will turn to the 19th chapter of I Nephi you will find these significant words:

And as for those who are at Jerusalem, saith the prophet, they shall be scourged by all people, because they crucify the God of Israel, and turn their hearts aside, rejecting signs and wonders, and power and glory of the God of Israel;

And because they turn their hearts aside, saith the prophet, and have despised the Holy One of Israel, they shall wander in the flesh, and perish, and become a hiss and by-word, and be hated among all nations;

Nevertheless, when that day cometh, saith the prophet, that they no more turn aside their hearts against the Holy One of Israel, then will he remember the covenants which he made to their fathers;

Yea, then will he remember the isles of the sea; yea, and all the people who are of the house of Israel, will I gather in, saith the Lord, according to the words of the prophet Zenos, from the four quarters of the earth;

Yea, and all the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord, saith the prophet; every nation, kindred, tongue and people shall be blessed.

And I, Nephi, have written these things unto my people, that perhaps I might persuade them that they would remember the Lord, their Redeemer.

During the few moments that I occupy this position, I desire to say something regarding this significant prophecy with a view of reaching the young men and the young women of Israel, that they might do two things, the first of which is to stop amidst their pleasures, to pause in the midst of the rush of this Twen-