



Type: Magazine Article

America—A Choice Land

Author(s): Donna D. Sorenson

Source: *Relief Society Magazine*, Vol. 27, No. 5 (May 1940), pp. 343-344

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Abstract: The Book of Mormon prophesied of Christopher Columbus and declares America to be “a choice land,” “a land of liberty.” The fulfillment of this promise rests upon obedience to Jesus Christ by those who occupy the land.

AMERICA—A CHOICE LAND

Donna D. Sorensen, Second Counselor

SIX hundred years before Christ, an American prophet and seer looked down the vista of twenty centuries and foretold the discovery of this nation by Columbus. Nephi, in the Book of Mormon, said: "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 Nephi 13.)

The "man among the Gentiles" we believe to be Christopher Columbus. It was my good fortune at one time to do some research on the life of this man, and I was deeply impressed with the motivating spirit of his existence. As one biographer said: "The kernel of his being was restlessness. He was always on the move until his death. He wandered unceasingly from country to country and sailed from sea to sea, one of the most tormented figures that history has ever known." Another biographer has written: "One divines a man burning in the conviction of a mission, but knowing not as yet of his direction and seeing no path before him." One of our own Church writers of this day and age has said of Columbus: "It was not doubt that drove Columbus across the sea; it was faith—the impelling force of the spirit of the Lord."

The Lord, speaking through Jacob, as recorded in the Book of Mor-

mon, II Nephi 10, says that America shall be a "land of liberty" and "it is a choice land . . . above all other lands, wherefore I will have all men that dwell thereon that they shall worship me."

America a choice land in what particulars? Choice in its physical features: the beauty of its mountains, valleys, lakes, trees, geological formations, etc. Choice, too, because of the spirit which broods over it—the spirit of freedom—and because it has been the haven for many of the world's oppressed. Choice because it was the nation chosen for the restoration of the Gospel. Choice because we believe men were raised up to prepare its Constitution. Choice because Zion is to be established on this continent.

Numbers of people who have traveled this country from "sea to shining sea" have revelled in its delightful features; but now in the time of peril confronting many of the nations of the earth it becomes, with its peacefulness and liberty, indeed a choice land.

America and its people have been promised rich blessings, but like all other blessings given to mankind these, too, rest upon obedience to principles upon which these blessings are predicated. Let us look back upon these prophecies. The people of the land shall prosper and enjoy the favor of heaven "so long as they follow righteousness and maintain the pure principles upon which this government was founded." The Latter-day Saints hold "that the Declaration of Independence and

the Constitution of the United States are inspired documents, . . . framed by men under Divine direction."

Probably we, as mothers in the home, are not doing enough to teach our children a love of this country of ours with its God-directed background and history. Democracy can not be maintained as a pattern of government unless it is understood, and people must be educated to value the heritage which we, perhaps, have come to accept as a matter of course. Surely it is not too early to teach the children at our knees the principles of democratic government.

In the record of the Jaredites, the Lord in speaking of this land states further: "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."

Women in this generation are faced with a bewildering array of choices, and many tempting opportunities await them for self-development. Sometimes there is difficulty in choosing wisely and well the things that will endure in our lives and the lives of our loved ones. The whole alluring world of art, literature, science, music, poetry, and painting beckons to be made our own; but let us never forget that a study of these can never be made a substitute for the Gospel. These are placed on earth to delight the hearts

of the people, but "salvation itself comes only by one route—the Gospel of Jesus Christ." The Lord has said, "To be learned is good if we hearken unto the counsels of God," and the Lord has specifically stated in this prophecy that this land shall be a land of liberty only so long as the people of the land serve Jesus Christ.

Let us urge the keeping of the commands of the Lord, and with this will come the worship of God the Father. The mother in her home and in her management of her home often is the determining factor as to whether the family are churchgoers on Sunday morning. If the Sabbath day has been anticipated by her and preparation made and urged by her upon the family, the physical factors in that home are usually conducive for church attendance. Are we doing our full share in this regard; if so, we are helping to maintain this land as a land of liberty.

Ever since the restoration of the Gospel, women in the Church, as they have learned the principles of truth, must have felt some necessity of obeying our Father and worshipping Him; but with the liberties of life, speech and the press abolished in many countries of the world, the words of the Lord in regard to the destiny of this country come with a fresh power of appeal and should motivate us anew in our determination to do all within our power to serve the Lord and assist our families in this regard.