

THE LAND OF ZION.

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Upon this subject your humble servant will essay to address this intelligent audience this afternoon. To the Saints, the very term "Land of Zion" suggests first to the mind the place now inhabited by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,—the fair, romantic and envied Utah with its bold mountain chains and fertile valleys. Utah, with its deep canon gorges crystal streams, babbling brooks, limpid lakes, and briny inland sea. Utah, which, but for the indomitable Mormon Pioneers, might still have been inhabited only by predatory Indian bands with wickiups to occupy the places where cities stand, and Temple spires pierce the eternal vaults. Utah, so successfully reclaimed from the wilderness of ages, and converted into the abode of civilization, by a people envied for their evident ability for self-government. Utah, where common schools disperse the primary rudiments of learning to children, and colleges polish the advanced student with a knowledge of the sciences. Utah, the gathering place, to which the oppressed and down-trodden of the nations can come from year to year "as doves flock to their windows." Yet, Utah, with all her wealth of soil and climate; with its mines of unknown treasures resting within the rocky receptacles of her majestic mountains; Utah with its 150,000 inhabitants, occupies but a very small portion of what may be denominated the Land of Zion. The Prophet Joseph Smith announced that the Land of Zion comprised the entire continent of North and South America, with all of the adjacent islands. This gives an almost boundless scope, an extensive field, a broad theatre for thought and action. It occupies a portion of the globe's surface sufficient to constitute a hemisphere. Its geographical location and interest is unrivaled. Its scenery is unsurpassed in point of romantic beauty, by that of Switzerland or the other States of Europe. Broad rivers run almost across the entire continent, flowing into the Atlantic, affording ample water transportation for the products of the Old World, far up into the interior to be distributed among teeming millions. It possesses a magnificent chain of lakes—Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario—and near the foot of Erie the Falls of Niagara thunder the voice of maddened waters in a manner that defies the cataracts of the earth to produce a parallel. It is the great drain of these lakes with all the rivers flowing into them. The quantity of water precipitated over the falls is estimated at one hundred million tons per hour. "In the sublimity and grandeur which attach to the irresistible rush and leap of mighty waters, Niagara stands alone, matchless and unrivaled."

Magnificent forests of valuable timber, interspersed with immense stretches of rolling prairie lands; level plains and lofty mountains; broad rivers, babbling brooks and tiny rivulets; grottoes and subterranean passages,—are among the many natural attractions which delight the eye of the tourist who traverses this broad continent for profit or pleasure. In a few words, it is a land wonderful in its geographical construction, and abundant in the attractiveness of its scenic beauty. In noting its peculiar feature upon the map, it is not strange that the Prophet Isaiah, while wrapped in vision, beheld, from far eastern Asia, these continents, and wrote of "the land shadowing with wings" "whose lands the rivers have spoiled, the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion." The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of it as being the Land of Zion. The terms are not contradictory. Whether there was or was not, in the economy of the Divine Ruler, a design in placing the inspiration in the hearts of the patriot fathers to give the proud eagle its perch upon the banners of freedom that a resemblance might be discernable in its outstretched wings and the foundation of the North and South American continent, is not for me to say; but certainly the symbolism is peculiar and significant. In this connection, it should be borne in mind that this favored ancient prophet, at the time the vision of this land was hebeled by him, stood in Asia, east of Ethiopia, and when he called attention to "the land shadowing with wings," in order to identify or give direction to the land he saw, was careful to state that it was beyond the rivers of Ethiopia."

A person standing before a large map of these continents will recognize in their shape the resemblance to outstretched wings, one dipping into the Atlantic and the other reaching to the waves of the Pacific. If this is insufficient, notice upon the map the nice resemblance to outstretched wings made by the lakes of North America. Hence, when Isaiah beheld this land in vision it is not surprising that he made the exclamation as if saying Ho, to the land, or, behold "the land shadowing with wings." In fact it is claimed by some who are learned that the first word of the 18th chapter of Isaiah is mistranslated. Instead of its being "woe" it should be, or, behold.

For a brief period, let the mind now wander back through the ages, to the beginning. This, of course, can be done quickly; by the exercise of those

electric powers with which the human intellect is endowed. But we need not go as far back as the rebellion in heaven when Jesus was chosen and Lucifer fell. We will not go quite so far as the time when the six thousand years work of the earth's creation began; but the mind may rest upon that joyful period when the labor was finished, complete, and accepted by the great and supreme Eloheim. The results of the six days' labor was pronounced very good and the seventh was a day of rest. "The heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them;" but there was no man to dwell upon the fair inheritance. So the Lord God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

This primeval period can be contemplated with feelings of felicity. A new world, just from the hands of the Infinite Creator, perfect, without a blemish. A new earth, without a talot upon its surface. A beautiful influence of purity pervaded its landscapes, filled its forests, mingled in the melody of the rippling waters and permeated the ethereal element that enveloped the globe. Adam and Eve (his wife) dwelt in the Garden of Eden, themselves as innocent and sanctified as the new world over which they swayed the first centre of dominion. It is said that they shined; that they partook of the forbidden fruit and entailed death upon themselves and posterity. In this particular, no doubt they broke the commandment against partaking of the forbidden fruit; nevertheless, they were also commanded to be fruitful and multiply. They fell or stepped down to a mortal state. But did not Adam fall that man might be? Eve, it will be remembered, was the first to partake of the forbidden fruit. In consequence of this Adam saw that they must be forever separated and hence the commandment given them to be fruitful and multiply could not be fulfilled. If we reason naturally, we will say this condition of things must have been unpleasant to him. I am aware that important principles are involved here and a person unskilled in the mysteries of Godliness, as is your humble speaker, had better not row his boat too far out into the deep waters. Hence, upon this point, I will not give anything to be the doctrines of the Latter-day Saints. But it is repugnant to my feelings to impute improper and unholly desires to our Edenized ancestors. I would rather, on my own responsibility, say: it better comports with the prestige and dignity of that illustrious pair that they had much knowledge as to the purposes and objects of the earth's creation, and that, rather than those purposes should be rendered void and they be forever separated, Adam would prefer to take upon himself and posterity the effects of the fall; knowing that the Messiah would come in the meridian of time and give His life as a ransom; meditate for the transgression: bring to pass a resurrection from the dead and restore Adam and all his obedient posterity to that state of perfection that existed before the fall. At all events, does not this view impart to Adam a character more dignified and noble than to charge, as many do, that passion tempted him from the path of virtue? Is it not a pleasing anticipation, that the great and glorious future will fully vindicate characters so exalted as were those who held the first dominion at the earth's primeval excellence?

The earth, also, fell from this state of original perfection. The sin of Cain fixed upon it the first stain of human blood. Then bloodshed followed bloodshed, sin followed sin and when the posterity of Adam had extended to the days of Noah their abominations and crimes assumed such proportions that the Ruler of the universe brought the flood and swept them all from the earth except Noah and those saved with him in the ark, numbering only eight souls. It is unnecessary here to dwell upon this flood which deluged the entire globe, and destroyed all human and animal life, except what was preserved in the ark.

The land where Adam dwelt can be easily located by the Latter-day Saints. By referring to pages 4, 15, 16, 17 Book of Doctrine and Covenants, we find that Adam-oni-Ahman, "the place where Adam shall come to visit his people, or the ancient of days shall sit," (Daniel 7: 9-14) is a place called Spring Hill, Davis County, Missouri. There are the "mountains of Adam-oni-Ahman," the "plains of Olaha Shinebah," or the land where Adam dwelt." There Adam built an altar, offered sacrifice and blessed his posterity. Your humble speaker has had the privilege of passing over the location just named. Are my hearers able to declare where the Garden of Eden was planted? Is there a more natural location for this than the American continent and what we understand to be the Centre Stake of Zion?

After forty days and forty nights, as we understand, the waters of this terrible flood began to subside and the Ark of Noah was safely landed upon terra firma. The place of its landing is thus spoken of by Philip Smith, B. A., in his work entitled "The Ancient History of the East," page 19.

"Nearly all interpreters of Scripture place the cradle of the Postdiluvian race in the highlands of Asia; and, while some contend for the Alpine plateau of Little Bokhara (the Belour-tagh) as the Heron and Beresat of In-

dia and Persian traditions, the more general opinion adheres to the mountains of Armenia. If the former is the more natural centre for the Aryan race which took possession of Iran and northern India, the latter, (which prevalent tradition identifies with Ararat) seems the appropriate starting place for the peoples of Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa."

It is not strictly essential to our present purpose to locate the precise place of the landing of the ark, or detail the many interesting incidents connected with that event. The above quotation fixes that spot near enough. However, as Ararat is probably the highest mountain existing in that vast region, it is reasonable to suppose that the agency of those on board the ark would be employed to guide it thither as the first point of earth to be seen protruding from the watery element. Wherever the locality was, the place swarmed with interesting events that must have engrossed the attention of Noah and his companions. The position he occupied relative to the earth and its future history—though not in every respect the same—was similar to that of Adam at the beginning. Adam, it will be borne in mind, was, before the fall, a pure being, while Noah was under the effects of the fall. Noah inherited death as the result of that original transgression. The earth was, by the flood, swept of its inhabitants with the exception of the few preserved in the ark which had, perhaps, conveyed them thousands of miles from their original homes. Who can identify the place where the ark was uplifted from the earth and borne away upon the broad bosom of the waters? Was it upon one of the Eastern or Western continents? I have heard that the great modern Prophet, Joseph Smith, did point out the place.

The earth, since the days of Adam, had been stained with the blood of murder and was not pure and spotless as when it bloomed with pristine freshness and verdure. The marks of sin and transgression were upon its face. But it had been baptized in the flood. It had received a promise of purification by fire and that its ultimate destiny was to be redeemed from its fallen condition; obtain a resurrection, and revolve in an orbit nearer the celestial throne were Jehovah rules over the myriads of celestialized worlds which revolve through the immensity of space.

The millions of the earth's inhabitants had dwindled to eight souls; and the beasts of the field, the birds and fowls of the air that swarmed through the many years from the beginning to the deluge were extinct, save the few which accompanied that favored Patriarch in that singular transit over the face of the waters. The human race and all the creations that had breathed the breath of life were nearly extinct. Yet a remnant was spared with which again to replenish the earth. And this time this little germ was planted in the eastern parts of Asia. The race of man became prolific and in process of time spread out over Europe, Western Asia and North Africa. All those countries became filled with teeming thousands. The march of emigration westward from the initial point where the ark rested was only checked by the broad Atlantic. All knowledge of the wonderful continent that lay beyond, towards the setting sun, had passed from the memory of man. But the great Eloheim had made promises concerning that land which, in due time, He would take steps to fulfill.

Let us now turn our thoughts to Jerusalem, to the time when that city was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar. (2nd Kings, Chapter 25th.) A great and good man dwelt there. He was a Prophet of the Lord and labored with all his might to turn the people of that city from their wickedness. Because of his diligence in pointing out their transgressions and warning them of judgments, if they did not repent, the people sought his life and the Lord commanded him to take his family, consisting of his wife and four sons—Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi—and flee into the wilderness. This he did and the time of his exit was 600 years before Christ.

We have now reached a most interesting and important period of history. Time, however, will not allow us to amplify upon it. To become acquainted with the exodus and travels of Lehi and his family, from and after the time of their starting, following them in their travels through the wilderness until they finally pitched their tents upon the seashore and constructed a ship, you will, of necessity, have recourse to the Book of Mormon. President George Q. Cannon also gives a succinct account of this in his very able and interesting book entitled *The Life of Nephi*. Neither have we time to relate the interesting account of the voyage across the sea; but let us, with the eye of faith, view them after those dangers were passed and they landed upon the shores of the land of promise, and began to spread abroad and multiply. It is important to quote here, however, what the Prophet Joseph Smith said as to the travels of Lehi while crossing the ocean and the place of landing, as furnished by President Cannon, in a foot note on page 68 of his book already alluded to: "They traveled nearly a south-south-east direction until they came to the 19th degree of north latitude; then, nearly east to the sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chili, 30 degrees south latitude."

From this we are able to fix the initial point or place of starting to,

Lehi's small colony. They were in a most auspicious portion of the earth so far as climate, health and soil are concerned. Their first steps were wisely taken. Agriculture claimed their early attention. They put into the ground the seeds they had brought with them from Jerusalem which produced an abundance for their support.

"In exploring the wilderness" they found animals of every kind—the cow, the ox, the ass and the horse, the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals which were for the use of man; they also found ores of all kinds, particularly gold, silver and copper. The animals they tamed for their use, and Nephi and his people raised large flocks and herds of every kind.

Shortly after their arrival, Lehi informed his people that he had learned, through a vision from the Lord, that Jerusalem had been destroyed, and he said that they remained there they also would have perished. He drew the attention of his children to the goodness of the Lord in warning them to flee out of Jerusalem and in preserving them until they had reached this choice land, which the Lord had covenanted should be for the inheritance of his seed for ever, and also for all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord. To those brought out of other countries this should be a land of liberty, so long as they should serve God according to the commandments which He has given; but if iniquity should abound the land should be cursed for their sakes. He told them that this land would be kept from the knowledge of other nations, for the reason that if they discovered it, they would overrun it and there would be no place for an inheritance."—*Life of Nephi*, pp. 69 and 75.

Time will not allow us to dwell elaborately upon the history of that mighty Nephtite nation which grew up upon this hemisphere, of which the little colony from Jerusalem was the germ. They multiplied rapidly; were industrious and grew rich. The Lord blessed and prospered them as long as they hearkened to those Prophets and inspired leaders whom He raised up in their midst. They became a nation, educated and enlightened; possessing the requisite qualifications for self-government. They turned their attention extensively to agriculture; built cities; acquired a knowledge of the arts and sciences; built sanctuaries in which to worship the living God; and even erected a magnificent temple to the Lord similar to Solomon's temple, but not so costly. They had a dispensation of the Gospel and organized a Church like unto the one in the days of the Savior. They even had a visit from the Savior soon after His crucifixion, who taught them many precious principles and made promises to the Twelve Apostles that at least three of their number should be changed and thus be enabled to tarry upon the earth until He should come in His glory to reign upon the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. There are these living contemporaneous with us who have beheld and conversed with these favored members of the Quorum of the Nephtite Twelve Apostles.

The Nephtite nation, from the time of its rise to the period of decadence, occupied a little less than ten hundred years. They filled up the countries now known as Chili, Ecuador, Peru, etc., which was a very choice region, with fertile soil, healthful climate, and, in many parts, producing an abundance of tropical fruits. But in the "thirty and seventh year of the reign of the judges," they began to build large ships, which they "launched into the west sea by the narrow neck which led into the land northward." This, doubtless, took place at the Isthmus of Darien or Panama. By means of these ships, an account of which is given in the last chapter of the Book of Alma, many thousands emigrated from the South American to the North American continent. Here, also, they spread abroad, filled the land and prospered as long as they kept the commandments of God and hearkened to their Prophets. But in the process of time they became opulent and were lifted up in the pride of their hearts. They forgot God and the abundance of His tender mercies. They delighted in all kinds of abominations; hence the Lord withdrew from them His Spirit and suffered them to be divided up into warlike bands and to wage fierce and bloody wars against each other, even that women and children were slaughtered in the thirst for blood and vengeance. Year after year and month after month their warlike resources and numbers of their armies were depleted. Many of their generals forgot God and depended alone for success upon their skill in the arts of war. The people fell from the high civilization to which they were elevated during those years when they walked humbly together as brethren and kept the commandments of the Lord. From the circles of refinement and domestic felicity, they sunk into conditions worse than that of barbarism and indulged in practices the most unvirtuous and revolting. God would not suffer that they should longer pollute the blessed land which He had promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for an everlasting inheritance.

The bloody contest finally culminated at Cumoran. Thither all the armies and people of the Nephtites and Lamanites had gathered and for days did they war valiantly to exterminate and revel in each other's blood. There, upon that ensanguined field, the glory of a people once favored of the Almighty, a people once elevated to the proudest pinnacle of civil and religious liberty—

became extinct and the Lamanites alone were left to possess the land. All, yes, all of the descendants of that little colony which was led from Jerusalem by the illustrious Lehi and Nephi had fallen in the internecine strife—gone to the world of spirits, except the faithful and favored Moroni who was spared to hide up the sacred records on plates of gold, to come forth and be translated in due time by that great and mighty Prophet Joseph Smith.

The people refused to hearken to the warning of the prophets, but continued to practice abominations and would not be restrained. The persuasions of the just men among them were disregarded; and the helpless and harmless, the aged, who tottered near the brink of the grave; the matron and the fair maiden; the widow and the orphan,—all, to an extent unparalleled in the experience of any people whose history is in our possession—were made to drink from the cup of want, suffering, oppression and abuse. All, except a small minority, had rejected the promptings of the Holy Spirit—thrown off their allegiance to the King of Glory, and enlisted under the banner of the Prince of Darkness, whose mission is to deceive—to lead the unsuspecting into forbidden paths—destroy the Church of Christ, break up the rule of the just and abridge the dominion of the righteous. Many of their rulers, who should have been benefactors and cherished their weak and dependent subjects, because of the abundance of temporal blessings, became oppressors and tyrants, and the weak and helpless were ground in to the dust beneath the merciless heel of despotism. Want, hunger, starvation and scourings filled their abodes. The voice of melody, which once chanted hallelujahs to God and the Lamb, was hushed in the walls of misery and anguish. Prayer and praise no longer ascended as sweet incense into the ears of Jehovah; but a debauched profanity desecrated those delightful regions which Omnipotence had promised to become the inheritance of the righteous. The blessings of the hills and fat valleys, of the sun and the moon, the abundant products of the rich soil, the treasures of the everlasting mountains, showered upon them fabulous stores of wealth which they consumed upon their lusts, and continued transgressions eventuated their fall and precipitated the annihilation of their race and nationality. In their fate we can see the perfect ability of the Almighty to build up nations and cast them down at his pleasure. He can cause their history to dazzle in the lustre of refinement and science; and He can permit them to topple down from the heights of renown, and, by acts of their own volition, plunge themselves into extinction. This land, be it remembered, He consecrates to liberty and noble deeds. Man-made kings will not prosper here. But King Emanuel shall yet send forth the law from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The banners of freedom will wave over the land and unfold themselves from mountain tops; and the oppressor will not prevail in his ambition to build up despotisms. There will be none to molest nor make afraid in all the holy mountain, and eternal will be the peace of those who trust in the Lord and watch for His appearing.

Great blessings await the land of Zion and the chosen seed who will hereafter inherit it; concerning which the Prophet Ether makes some glorious predictions. Let us quote a portion of his words as recorded by Moroni in the 6th chapter of the book of Ether: "And now I, Moroni, proceed to finish my record concerning the destruction of the people of whom I have been writing. For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that 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 dwelt upon the face thereof; and that it was the place of the New Jerusalem, which should come down out of heaven, and the Holy Sanctuary of the Lord. Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spoke concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land. Whereupon the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that He might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not; even as He was merciful unto the father of Joseph, that he should perish not, wherefore the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come when the earth shall pass away. And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old, save the old have passed away and all things have become new."

It is proper here to state that Jared and his company left the eastern continent anterior to the time that Lehi left Jerusalem, at the time the Lord commanded the languages at the tower of Babel. They came here by the direction of the Almighty. Upon this land their growth, prosperity, enlightenment and final overthrow, had been strikingly similar to that of the Nephtites. This colony of the Jaredites landed upon the shores of North America and upon this continent they principally built their cities and became a powerful and an enlightened nation. But, like the Israelitish nation which succeeded them in the in-