

An Address by Elder Orson Hyde,
Celebration of the Fourth of July
delivered in the Tabernacle,
Great Salt Lake City, July 4, 1854.

Remember Lexington, and Bunker Hill, and lastly Yorktown, with all the intermediate scenes as narrated in the history of the American Revolution! Remember the immortal Washington, chosen to lead our infant armies through the perils and hardships of an unequal contest, to the climax of victory and the pinnacle of fame! His name, embalmed in the never-dying sympathies of his grateful countrymen, will be heralded in the melody of song "while the earth bears a plant or the ocean rolls a wave."

In those early and perilous times, our men were few, and our resources limited. Poverty was among the most potent enemies we had to encounter; yet our arms were successful; and it may not be amiss to ask here, by whose power victory so often perched on our banner? It was by the agency of that same angel of God that appeared unto Joseph Smith, and revealed to him the history of the early inhabitants of this country, whose mounds, bones and remains of towns, cities and fortifications speak from the dust in the ears of the living with the voice of undeniable truth. This same angel presides over the destinies of America, and feels a lively interest in all our doings. He was in the camp of Washington; and, by an invisible hand, led on our fathers to conquest and victory; and all this to open and prepare the way for the Church and kingdom of God to be established on the western hemisphere, for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the world.

This same angel was with Columbus, and gave him deep impressions, by dreams and by visions, respecting this New World. Trammelled by poverty and by an unpopular cause, yet his persevering and unyielding heart would not allow an obstacle in his way too great for him to overcome; and the angel of God helped him——was with him on the stormy deep, calmed and troubled elements, and guided his frail vessel to the desired haven. Under the guardianship of this same angel, or Prince of America, have the United States grown, increased, and flourished, like the sturdy oak by the rivers of water.

To what point have the American arms been directed since the Declaration of our National Independence, and proven unsuccessful? Not one!

The peculiar respect that high Heaven has for this country, on account of the promises made to the fathers, and on account of its being the land where the mustard seed of truth was planted and destined to grow in the last days, accounts for all this good fortune to our beloved America.

But since the Prophets have been slain, the Saints persecuted, despoiled of their goods, banished from their homes, and no earthly arm to interpose for their rescue, what will be the future destiny of this highly-favoured country? Should I tell the truth as it clearly passes before my mind's eye, my friends might censure me, and I might be regarded as an enemy to my country. If I should not tell the truth, but withhold it to please men, or to avoid giving offence to any, I might be regarded, by the powers celestial, as the enemy of God. What shall I do under these

circumstances? Shall I be guilty of the crime of hesitating for a moment? No. Neither time nor place to hesitate now.

So sure and certain as the great water-courses wend their way to the ocean, and there find their level—so sure as the passing thunder-cloud hovers around yonder Twin Peaks of the Wahsatch Mountains, and upon their grey and barren rocks pours the fury of its storm, just so sure and certain will the guardian angel of these United States fly to a remote distance from their borders, and the anger of the Almighty wax hot against them in causing them to drink from the cup of bitterness and division, and the very dregs, stirred up by the hands of foreign powers, in a manner more cruel and fierce than the enemies of the Saints in the day of their greatest distress and anguish; and all this because they laid not to heart the martyrdom of the Saints and Prophets, avenged not their blood by punishing the murderers, neither succoured nor aided the Saints after they were despoiled of their goods and homes.

Would to God that we could forget this part of our experience in the land of our fathers! But we cannot forget it. It is incorporated in our being. We shall carry it to our graves, and in the resurrection it will rise with us. Had the United States been as faithful a guardian to the Latter-day Saints as the angel of God has been to them, she would never know dissolution, nor be humbled in dishonour by the decrees of any foreign powers.

I ask no earthly being to indorse this my testimony, or to adopt it as his own sentiment. A little time will prove whether Orson Hyde alone has declared it, or whether the heavenly powers will back up this testimony in the face of all the world.

When Justice is satisfied, and the blood of martyrs atoned for, the guardian angel of America will return to his station, resume his charge, and restore the Constitution of our country to the respect and veneration of the people; for it was given by the inspiration of our God.

One positive decree of Jehovah, respecting this land, is, that no king shall ever be raised up here, and that whosoever seeketh to raise up a king upon this land shall perish. The spirit of this decree is that no king shall bear rule in this country.

(Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 6: 368-70.)