

Chapter 1

In the Providence of God

In looking at the history of our country it would seem clear that God ages ago prepared America as the home of civil and religious liberty for the oppressed nations of the earth. It has been said: "He guided the Mayflower over the sea, so that the Pilgrim Fathers landed safely on Plymouth Rock. He directed the course of our civilization so that we have become a great nation."

Never before was there a country to which the people of every land have flocked as they have to this. Nor has there been any other nation which was dedicated at its birth to the proposition that all men are created equal, and which in its highest law expressly recognized the inalienable right of all its citizens to civil and religious freedom.

America in its very inception was racially diverse. Columbus sailed under the Spanish flag, and among his crew were an Irishman, an Englishman, and a Jew, thus perhaps foreshadowing the later history of the American people. We are told that nine nationalities were among the signers of the Declaration of Independence. "This hemisphere," says one historian, "was laid away for no one race."

In a hundred years of American history, about 40,000,000 persons, representing almost every nation under the sun, left their homes in foreign lands to build new ones in America. Thus our nation was built by immigrants and their sons and daughters, not only the physical America of rich farms, railroads, and factories, but also the America of art, letters, and political eminence.

In 1940 the foreign white stock in the United States numbered 34,600,000 or about 26% of the total population. About 11,400,000, or roughly one third of this number, were foreign born. The remaining 23,200,000 persons of foreign or mixed parentage consisted of 15,200,000 with only the father foreign born, and 2,700,000 with only the mother foreign born.

The Census Bureau reported in 1940 that there were 22,000,000 persons in the United States with a mother tongue other than English. On April 1, 1940 we had 5,237,000 persons of German birth or parentage; 4,595,000 of Italian birth or parentage; and 2,341,712 of Scandinavian descent. There were 4,831,186 Jews. Some 250,000 Jewish refugees have been admitted to this country since 1941. Not less

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than 1,500,000 Mexicans live in the four southwestern states, and a total of something over 2,000,000 people in this country use the Spanish language. Add to this 1,040,884 Russians, 2,073,615 Poles, 273,366 French, and the millions of other nationalities, who live in Canada, and the sum total will represent North America as one of the largest foreign mission fields in the world.

Besides these, we have 333,969 Indians, 77,504 Chinese, 126,947 Japanese, and 45,547 Filipinos. Among these 46,840 Chinese live on the Pacific Coast, where reside also 35,086 Filipinos.

The influx of foreign-born people from the ends of the earth to the New World has come by no chance. This situation exists in the providence of God. "When we study how our country was discovered and settled," says one writer, "we see the design of providence in it all."

And again from the pen of another writer: "The greatest and most favored nation upon the earth is the United States. A gracious providence has shielded this country, and poured upon her the choicest of heaven's blessings. Here the persecuted and oppressed have found refuge. Here the Christian faith in its purity has been taught. This people has been the recipient of great light and unrivaled mercies." *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 4, p. 398.

"God seems to have had in mind a unique purpose in establishing this country," says Mr. Mark A. Dunbar of the Home Missions Council, New York City, "to bring forth a new nation that would be flesh and blood of every nation, race, and color in the world, a brotherhood of man in the most inclusive and comprehensive sense. This surely is a challenge not only to the state but in a very significant way to the church."

That America is still the land of promise to the oppressed people of the earth is well described in the following prose poem called the "Song of the Refugees."

"America,
Nation of all nations,
We have come to thy shores, America,
Like flotsam
Haunted by the nightmare of harrowing yesterdays.
How our spirit flaringly rose
When we touched thy ground!
Our hearts were aglow with a new hope
That spelled heaven....
O that there still is a country on earth

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That boasts a Statue of Liberty at her door,
And whose people can proudly face this shining symbol
And must not hide their faces in shame!
We salute thee!
Take our hearts, take our souls, America,
Homestead of humanity!
We want to be thine forever!
“In thy hour of need, We,
Refugees of all nations, and of all faiths,
Aliens as we still may be to thee, then,
We shall be among the first vying to defend thee,
America,
To the last drop of our blood!
So help us! God
Amen,”

The kindly ministry of Christian religion for our neighbors of foreign speech was never more essential than today. Will Durant, in his book “A Program for America,” states this truth: “If there is one precious thing that remains among us it is our social democracy, the readiness of most Americans to treat one another as human beings whose differences in worth would not be tremendous in the eyes of God. Whosoever discriminates against a man because of race or class does not deserve to be called American for in doing this he is helping to deprive his country of half its meaning in history.”

In his work “The Immigrant,” F. J. Haskin remarks: “My children shall be your children and your land shall be my land, because my sweat and my blood will cement the foundations of the America of Tomorrow.”

This is a situation that should concern all right-thinking Americans and especially those who set great store by the church and all for which it stands.

The greatness of the American civilization is based on the principles of the Holy Bible, and the success of molding and melting many nationalities into one nation in our land is to a large extent made possible only because the founding fathers of this republic were believers in these Bible principles.

Inscription on the Pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor

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Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame, With conquering limbs
astride from land to land Here at our sea-washed sunset gates shall
stand A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame Is the imprisoned
lightning, and her name Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command The air-bridged
harbour that twin cities frame. "Keep, ancient lands, your storied
pomp!" cries she With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor, Your
huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your
teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me, I lift
my lamp beside the golden door!"

EMMA LAZARUS

(Emma Lazarus, nineteenth century American poetess, whose
ancestors were among the first Jewish settlers in Colonial America,
coming to this country from Brazil in 1654.)