

don't act in the way we have described good stewards should. That is why we believe that the task of social and economic reform is primarily a task not for the state but for the church, which, through its teachings, its spiritual ordinances leading to regeneration and new birth, and through the power of Jesus Christ which flows through it, can change human nature and make men into the kind of men who will be good, wise, worthy, unselfish, and diligent stewards, devoted to the establishing of the kingdom of God on earth, and the working out of righteous principles in all social and financial relationships.

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Thy Kingdom Come

After this manner shall ye pray, saying, Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.—Matt. 6:9-15 (I.V.).

IT IS significant that when John the Baptist came preaching, he did not say that the kingdom of heaven was going to be available in some far-off, distant day and time; it was available then. "The kingdom of heaven is *at hand*" (Matthew 3:28). Jesus expressed the same idea somewhat later when he said, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). Some people have interpreted this verse to mean that the kingdom is in the individual heart. Since Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees, it is not plausible to believe that the kingdom of which he was speaking was within *them*, or in *their* hearts. A marginal note in the King James version reads, "Or, *among* you." Another version says, "The kingdom of heaven is in the midst of you." Still another says, "The kingdom of God has already come unto you." Moffatt says, "The reign of God is now in your midst." The Emphatic Greek Diaglott says, "God's royal majesty [that is, the King] is among you." A very recent study of this passage and of the Greek preposition translated "within" has brought the conclusion that the real meaning of the passage is, "The kingdom of God is available unto you."

THE KINGDOM IS AVAILABLE

Whichever of these renditions you prefer, the idea runs through them all that the kingdom of God is not some far-off, impossible-to-be-achieved ideal, but a reality which exists now. On another occasion Jesus himself said, "The kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matthew 12:28). Christ is the King of this kingdom, his laws are the laws of the kingdom. His subjects will obey his will and his commandments. We can be citizens of his kingdom at this very moment or any time we choose to accept him as King and obey his laws completely, unreservedly, sincerely, instead of halfheartedly, fearfully, with reservations and backward looks at the kingdoms of this world in which we have heretofore trusted. The kingdom is available now, is at hand, is among you, has already come unto you.

Notice that this idea is expressed again in the Lord's Prayer. The first portion of that prayer recognizes that the kingdom has not yet come because men are not yet willing to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. We are therefore taught to pray in the future tense: "Thy kingdom come." But the conclusion of the prayer changes the tense of the verb completely, and speaks of the kingdom as present: "Thine *is* the kingdom." The kingdom is God's. It exists now. It will come to us and exist for us just as soon as we are willing to obey all of God's laws, and do his will on earth as in heaven.

Because it costs so much and requires so much to live by kingdom laws in everyday human relationships, and because we cling so tenaciously to our pet sins, our petty hatreds, fears, resentments, angers, sorrows, remorse, and guilt complexes, we do not have the kingdom. We have attempted to spiritualize the kingdom and say that it is some vague, intangible thing which exists in the human heart, but not in demonstrable, tangible, concrete form. Because we have said that the kingdom exists only in the human heart, we have denied that the

laws of the kingdom have anything to do with such practical affairs as wages and hours, banking and stock market, economics, politics, finance, industry, agriculture, education, public health, or the problem of war. We pay lip service to the kingdom for an hour or two on Sunday, but utterly refuse to live by its practical laws during business hours. The world still waits upon a people who will obey the laws of the kingdom in all the practical, tangible, material things, as well as in spiritual ways, who will live out the laws of stewardship individually and collectively and make the kingdom a reality here and now, on this earth, in our time.

A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE OBEYING GOD'S WILL

It should be noted at this point, however, that no man can live the law of God perfectly in isolation. Christian living, or living in obedience to the laws of the kingdom, consists not only in right attitudes of the heart and mind and spirit, but also in right action. John says: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and truth" (I John 3:17, 18). Right action demands the presence of other people with whom and for whom we can perform our *actions* in accordance with the kingdom laws.

Kingdom living consists not only in right relationships between man and God, but in right relationships between man and man. It is impossible to love God as we ought, and at the same time hate our neighbor. John says further: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20). Love at its best cannot be one-sided; it must be reciprocal. Even if we grant that it is possible for a man to love one who hates him, under such conditions there cannot be full, satisfying, efficient,

or mutually beneficial relationships between the two unless they love each other and work with and for each other. One man might be ever so good, completely Christlike in his love for his fellowmen and in doing God's will, but he could not live as he would like to live, or as he ought to live, so long as the people around him would not reciprocate and join him in cooperative obedience to the laws of the kingdom.

In other words, a community of people, regenerate, obedient, willing, and eager to do God's will on earth, can do that will more completely, more efficiently. One man paying tithing can do some small good but he alone can never preach the gospel in all the world, to every nation. However, many men paying their tithes to an organized group such as the church, which is formed for the express purpose (among others) of promulgating the gospel in all the world, can fulfill Christ's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel in a way that no one man could do alone. One man who is willing to devote his surplus property to the common good would be foolish to give it into the hands of selfish, wicked, ungodly, unregenerate men. But if a group of men like himself could join together, pooling their surplus wealth for the good of all, the kingdom law could be lived among them more fully, more effectively, more efficiently. Even in the matter of giving temporary relief to the needy as a prelude to their rehabilitation, one man can do comparatively little. But if he joins his efforts with the efforts of other kingdom-minded men like himself, the little which he is able to contribute can be used to best advantage, with the highest efficiency of results.

There is still another reason for "togetherness" in these kingdom of God relationships. When one man or one family is surrounded by people with worldly ideals, people whose moral principles or standards of conduct are slightly or radically below standard, it is difficult for adults to maintain their Christian standards, and it is still more difficult to rear the children of the family according to those standards when they are constantly confronted with the bad examples and the

social pressures of those about them. It is always difficult for one to stand up against the many for what he believes to be right. But when a group of like-minded people can live together, each furnishes the example and the incentive for all the others to do right. Children can grow up in righteousness, with the moral force of the crowd, the community, and the neighborhood on the side of the highest type of Christian ideals.

ZION

Latter Day Saints historically have been and currently are concerned with a concept or an ideal which they call Zion. Zion is a combination of several things. Zion is a people called out of the world, gathered together for the sake of fellowship in economic and industrial affairs as well as spiritual. Zion is a people who are trying to obey and to live out the laws of the kingdom in the practical affairs of life. Zion is a people who have been regenerated by the power of Christ and his gospel so that they desire to live the laws of the kingdom. Zion is a condition; it is the pure in heart. Its citizens are those who have experienced the regenerating powers of Christ and his gospel ordinances, who have made full consecration of their lives, whose motives are unselfish, whose aim is peace. Zion is also a place to which these people gather. Zion is also a social and economic order, including various organizations, associations, and instrumentalities by which social and economic ideals can be implemented and given practical application. Zion is the kingdom of God on earth, subject to civil law until Christ comes, but acknowledging Christ as king and ruler, obeying his laws, doing his will on earth as it is done in heaven.

The history of the Latter Day Saint movement is largely a history of attempts to establish such a community, and to make the ideal a reality. As early as 1832 Jackson County, Missouri, and the "regions round about" were designated as

the physical location for Zion. Early attempts at colonization failed because of the antagonism of the earlier settlers, caused in part by lack of wisdom on the part of the Saints and by their opposing attitudes on the slavery question. Another attempt was made a few years later in the newly formed counties to the north, and a new city was named Far West; but this experiment was likewise ended by persecution and open warfare against the Saints. The next attempt was at Nauvoo, Illinois, which in its heyday was the largest city in the state of Illinois, larger even than Chicago at that time. Continued persecution resulted in the death of the prophet and leader Joseph Smith in 1844 and the ruthless scattering of the people again.

For many years after the death of Joseph Smith, the members of the church remained scattered. Some went to Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young. Other colonies under various leaders went to Texas, to Wisconsin, to California, to Iowa, to Pennsylvania. In 1860, the son of Joseph Smith, affectionately known as "Young Joseph," was called by some of these scattered remnants which had continued the church in congregational form but without any central government, to take his father's place at the head of the church. Its quorums and councils were reorganized, and again the people began to look toward the ideals of Zion which they still held dear. Young Joseph's advice to the church was not to undertake any mass movement of people, but to gather quietly and slowly as opportunity offered, establishing themselves by their industry and sobriety, and awaiting the promises of the Lord that Zion should not be moved out of her place. A beginning was made when a parcel of land was secured in southern Iowa, and the town of Lamoni was laid out in the midst of a thriving agricultural community. To this town the church moved its headquarters and its publishing house.

Meanwhile the Saints had been gathering, one family at a time, back to Independence out of which they had been driven in 1833. In 1878, there were only thirty-five members

in Independence. In 1879 these few began to plan the building of a chapel in Independence, which was completed in 1881 and paid for and dedicated on July 1, 1884. By 1887, the thirty-five had grown to four hundred and eighty, and the need for larger quarters was urgent. The cornerstone for the Stone Church was laid April 6, 1888. Today we have twenty-four congregations in the Independence area, with approximately twelve thousand members. In addition, there are large centers of church organization and population at Warrensburg, Kansas City, and St. Joseph, Missouri, within an hour's driving time of the church's headquarters in Independence.

In spite of our numerical growth, many of the ideals which we hope to bring to practical fruition are still waiting for the willingness and obedience of our people. Still, the ideals of Zion are the motivating force which brings our people to Independence and the surrounding regions. It is the purpose of those who gather that there might be established here such organizations of agricultural, industrial, economic, financial, and religious endeavor that we can implement and demonstrate the laws of the kingdom of God which we profess to believe. We gather to Zion, the place, in order that Zion, the people, the pure in heart, the practical demonstration of the kingdom of God, might be. We gather to Zion that here we might escape from the sins and perils which abound in a world that needs to learn obedience to the laws of God's kingdom. But more important still, we gather to Zion and we work and pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom in order that from that kingdom there might *go forth* the example of righteous, godly, cooperative living together, which shall give power and conviction to the gospel message which we are commissioned to take to all nations.