

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth.

Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, that thine enemies may be subdued; for thine is the honor, power and glory, forever and ever. Amen.¹

The world of technical knowledge and atomic energy is, despite this recent advancement, still the world of poverty, hunger, misgovernment, crime, domestic unhappiness, and personal frustration. Mastery over the elements of the material world has brought us only to daily fear of sudden death of our own making.²

Because of the inadequacy of our present world system in coping with these malfunctions, many people have proposed that a world government be set up as a solution to these pressing problems. The United Nations and other plans are the outgrowth of these present day sentiments. The Latter-day Saints from their beginning (1830) have also envisioned an era of righteous peace in a world order. The earliest accounts available give information relating to basic principles and doctrines which have evolved one upon another to form a consistent and relatively complete concept for the development of such a government. This plan recognizes the Innate rights of man and safeguards those rights with a society so formulated to elevate the poor, give the earth to the meek, and make the pure in heart the children of God.

This great movement, specifically designated as the cause of Zion,³ is inherently political and social as well as religious in make-up. As such, it has from the beginning contemplated a universal reign of peace and equality; such a peace being predicated upon the triumph of Zion and her correlated "Kingdom of God" (the latter to bear rule as a political, constitutional government, guaranteeing to all the prerogatives of moral agency in the free exercise of conscience, the protection of life, and the right and control of property).

In this study the writer will be primarily interested

In the "cause of Zion" and its development toward peace and world government; this government to be administered under the auspices of a resurrected and living God in the person of Jesus the Christ, who will in his own due time make his appearance and accept his legal position as "King of

Kings, and Lord of Lords.”⁴

President John Taylor, third president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in commenting on this government and its eventual relationship to the nations of the earth, stated:

The kingdom of God means the government of God. That means, power, authority, rule, dominion, and a people to rule over. But that principle will not be fulfilled, cannot be entirely fulfilled, until, as we are told in the scriptures, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he will rule over them, and when unto him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Christ, to the glory of God, the Father. That time has not yet come, but there are certain principles associated therewith that have come; namely, the introduction of that kingdom, and the introduction of that kingdom could only be made by that Being who is the King and Ruler, and the Head of that government, first communicating his ideas, his principles, his laws, his government to the people.⁵

From a Latter-day Saint viewpoint the Zion of God, as defined by their scriptural books, is highly correlated with this government. The name of Zion, however, has several distinct applications. By definition “Zion, or as written by the Greeks, Zion, probably meant bright, or sunny; but this commonplace significance is lost in the deeper and more effecting meaning that the name and title came to acquire.”⁶ As a factor in world government, the vision of Zion includes a world order under the authority and command of God, with capital cities located at the present site of the city of Independence in Jackson County, Missouri⁷ and at Jerusalem. The former, referred to as the City of Zion, is also denoted as the “New Jerusalem.” This, however, is not to be confused with the ancient or future city of Jerusalem in Palestine, since, according to the Book of Mormon, “after it (the Jerusalem of Palestine) should be destroyed it should be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord; wherefore, it could not be a new Jerusalem for it had been in a time of old.”⁸ But “a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land”⁹ (North America). It is more particularly of this city and its implications in world government that this study will be concerned with.

Under her perfected organization, Zion is likened unto a tent, the New Jerusalem or city of Zion being the “center place,”¹⁰ supported by surrounding stakes. This analogy is of Old Testament derivation. Isaiah declares: “Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities . . . not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.”¹¹ And again: “Enlarge the place of thy tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”¹² Throughout the scriptural works of the Church, Zion and her stakes are mentioned in this tent-like organization. To quote but an example we note that:

Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her

children are scattered . . . And, behold, there is none other place appointed; neither shall there be any other place appointed than that which I have appointed, for the work of the gathering of my saints until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion.¹³

And at a conference at Amherst, Ohio, January 1832, instructions were given that “Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened.”¹⁴

Territorially speaking, the whole of North and South America is referred to as the “land of Zion.”¹⁵ It is, according to the Book of Mormon, “a land which is choice above all other lands.”¹⁶ In conference April 8, 1844, Joseph Smith announced to the Church and to the world that “the whole of America is Zion itself from north to south, and. . . I have received instructions from the Lord that from henceforth wherever the Elders of Israel shall build up churches and branches unto the Lord throughout the States, there shall be a stake of Zion.”¹⁷ During this same conference Hyrum Smith interpreted his brothers declaration to mean that “North and South America . . . is the land of Zion.”¹⁸ Brigham Young, in considering it as a “perfect sweepstakes” and a “knock-down to the devil’s kingdom,”¹⁹ was not loathe in later years to lead his people from one inheritance in the land of Zion to another in the West; for the organization of Zion could be as well developed in the West as in Illinois or Missouri where their cause might be misunderstood and misrepresented.

To say that Zion will be confined to the limits of North and South America, however, is a fallacy indeed, for the Zion of the last days is destined to expand throughout the earth. “The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountains without hands shall roll forth until it has filled the whole earth.”²⁰ “The stakes of the tent of Zion are set farther and farther over the earth. They shall be in every land; and the Saints, the world over, mingling with all people, will enjoy the blessings of the Gospel and give light and truth to all nations.”²¹

For the purpose of clarification it may be well to refer briefly to other meanings of the term “Zion” which we shall be but indirectly associated with in this study. They are:

1. The name of Zion was given to the followers of Enoch, the seventh patriarch from Adam, and by implication also denoted the holy city which was founded for their habitation.²² The stipulative reasoning involved in so naming these people and their city is given as being “because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness.”²³

2. As a place the name of Zion was applied by David to a hill within the site of Jerusalem. Upon defeating the Jebusites, we are told, he “took the strong hold of Zion.”²⁴ The city he built up in this locality became known as Jerusalem the city of David.²⁵ The name of Zion was applied to the hill itself, or Mount Zion, and by extension of meaning to Jerusalem.”²⁶

3. Metaphorically, the term denotes the Church of God; or more specifically “the pure in heart.”²⁷ It should be noted that no place or habitation can be truly called Zion unless it is inhabited by the pure in heart. In the words of President John Taylor: “The Zion of God. What does it mean? The pure in heart in the first place. In the second place those who are governed by the law of God--the ware in heart who are governed by the law of God.”²⁸

4. To the location of the “mountain of the house of the Lord,” Micah gave the name of Zion, as he predicted its establishment in the “top of the mountains” in , the latter days as a place distinct from Jerusalem.²⁹ There had formerly been a Zion and a Jerusalem in the land of Palestine, but “the prophet Micah, ‘full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgement, and of might’ predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and its associated Zion, the former to ‘become heaps,’ and the latter to be ‘plowed as a field’; and then announced a new condition that is to exist in the last days, when another ‘mountain of the house of the Lord’ is to be established, and this is called Zion.”³⁰ In many Latter-day Saint sermons the belief has been expressed that this prophecy is in process of fulfillment at the present day by the activities of the Church in the mountainous regions of the West. This definition is in close alliance at present with that given under the former heading, differing only by stipulating a definite location of the Church at a given time.

5. Finally, in point of inclusion, Zion has still a larger meaning. Latter-day Saints view the work of God as not being circumscribed by earth-life alone, but rather, it embraces a number of spheres innumerable to man in his finite capacity--the work of God fills the immensity of space and the created children of God inhabit numerous planets.³¹ The righteous people from all of God’s creations throughout the eternities are called Zion. According to the Pearl of Great Price, a Latter-day Saint scriptural work, Enoch, the seventh patriarch from Adam, in speaking to the Lord, is quoted as saying: “And thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations, from all eternity to all eternity; and naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne.”³² And in the Doctrine and Covenants, it is revealed that it is for this purpose that “the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom” were given and for this purpose that Zion shall be established upon this earth, “otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.”³³

From the days of ancient Israel, when with Noses the people believed that the “Lord . . . will raise up a prophet” and “unto him” the people “shall hearken,”³⁴ to the time of the New Testament Church, when Peter declared that

Prophet to be Christ,³⁵ those of Israel have looked for the coming of the Kingdom of God “with great power and glory”³⁶; for “it shall come to pass that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”³⁷ Particularly is this significant when we note that “the kingdoms of this world are” destined to “become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.”³⁸ “And the kingdom and domination, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High . . . and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”³⁹

With the visitation of Moroni, the heavenly tutor of Joseph Smith during the period of the translation of the Book of Mormon, the prophecy of Noses regarding Christ was reiterated with the comment that “the day had not yet come when ‘they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people,’ but soon would come.”⁴⁰ According to the words of the resurrected Christ, as he spoke to the ancient Nephite disciples, when that day does come “saith the Father . . . whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel; and I will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.”⁴¹ This may be a momentous period of decision, for it could be that “darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people”⁴² as pertaining to the spiritual qualities so necessary to sustain a peaceful status, for “they perceive not the light and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men.”⁴³ Those, however, who are not “cut off” shall assist in the development of a new social and political order wherein the “meek shall inherit the earth,”⁴⁴ and men “shall beat their swords into plowshares and, their spears into pruning-hooks” and “they shall sit every man under his vine and under his figtree; and none shall make them afraid.”⁴⁵

From the foregoing analysis it seems evident that the ancient hope regarding the Kingdom of God and its culmination in filling the earth has been intrinsically routed into the latter day “restitution of all things”⁴⁶ and is correlated with the cause of Zion as a major sentiment among the people, inseparably connected with their faith. It was not without purpose, therefore, that Joseph Smith, the prophet of this latter day dispensation, could declare; “I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world.”⁴⁷ This determination was of a practical as well as of an ideal nature and was sustained, as Brigham Young said, by “the courage of an angel and the will of a God.”⁴⁸

In making such a declaration Joseph fully realized that the work in which he was engaged was radically different in nature and purpose from world governments of past ages. While discussing the subject he observed:

Other attempts to promote universal peace and happiness in the human family have proved abortive; every effort has failed; every plan and design has fallen to the ground; it needs the wisdom of God, the intelligence of God, and the power of God to accomplish this. The world

has had a fair trial for six thousand years; the Lord will try the seventh thousand Himself; 'He whose right it is, will possess the kingdom, and reign until He has put all things under His feet;' iniquity will hide its hoary head, Satan will be bound, and the works of darkness destroyed; righteousness will be put to the line, and judgement to the plummet, and 'he that fears the Lord will alone be exalted in that day.'⁴⁹

The nature of this kingdom is not belligerent in any sense of the word. "It will not be by sword or gun that this kingdom will roll on," the Prophet emphasized, "the power of truth is such that all nations will be under the necessity of obeying the Gospel."⁵⁰

Another major characteristic radically differing from the 'blood and iron' theories prevalent in the trend of social organization today is the sustaining power derived from free will and mutual confidence. Upon these principles the kingdom rests; as Joseph Smith declared: "It was my endeavor to so organize the Church, that the brethren might eventually be independent of every encumbrance beneath the celestial kingdom, by bonds and covenants of mutual friendship, and mutual love."⁵¹ That truth will prevail, has been the ardent belief of every true disciple of this cause. In the early days of the Church the Saints in the city of Kirtland endured such affliction believing that they were called "to bear a heavy burden in order that the foundation of the kingdom of God might be laid on a sure and certain basis, so that the prophetic vision of Daniel might most certainly be fulfilled, that this kingdom might break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever."⁵²

As we conclude this chapter of our study and reconsider the definitions given to the Zion of the present and future era, we may summarize our application of the term as follows. First, to a Church or a people, which at present are mainly established in western America. Second, to a central city or "center place," the foundation of which was laid during the early years of the Church,⁵³ but the redemption of which is yet future.⁵⁴ Finally, we may note an aspiration to spread that system over the Americas and finally over the world in order that the "one like the Son of Man" might be given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him."⁵⁵ This goal has been set from the beginning, even before the Church was organized as a legal association in April 1830.⁵⁶

Chapter Endnotes

¹ Doctrine and Covenants 65:5-6.

² See Barbara Wootton, "The Value of Scientific Method," cited in Hillman M. Bishop and Samuel Hendel, Basic Issues of American Democracy (2nd ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. 4.

³ See Doctrine and covenants 6:6; 11:6; 12:6; 14:6; 39:13; 84:2-5; 101:69-71, 75; 103:11-24, 34, 35; 105:27-29; 113:7, 8; 115:5, 6; 133:9.

⁴ Revelation 19:16.

- ⁵ John Taylor, The Gospel Kingdom (Salt Lake City: City: Bookcraft, 1943), p. 205.
- ⁶ James E. Talmage, The Articles of Faith (24th ed.; Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946), D. 346
- ⁷ The Prophet Joseph Smith in discussing these two cities stated: “The city of Zion spoken of by David, in the one hundred and second Psalm, will be built upon the land of America, ‘And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.’ (Isaiah XXXV:10). . . . But Judah shall obtain deliverance at Jerusalem. See Joel 11:32; Isaiah XXVI:20 and 21; Jeremiah XXXI:12; Psalms 1:5; Ezekiel XXXIV:11, 12 and 13. These are testimonies that the Good Shepherd will put forth His own sheep, and lead them out from all nations where they have been scattered in a cloudy and dark day, to Zion, and to Jerusalem; besides many more testimonies which might be brought.” Teachings of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), p. 17.
- ⁸ Book of Mormon: Ether 13:5. Hereafter in quoting from this work it will be simply designated as “Ether” since it bears the same relationship with the Book of Mormon (a canonized work of the L.D.S. Church) as any of the books comprising the Holy Bible have with this record.
- Further reference is made to the New Jerusalem in the writings of Enoch as given to the Church by Joseph Smith. This record states that the elect of the Lord will, in the latter days, be gathered unto a “Holy City” which ‘shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem. See Joseph Smith, “The Book of Moses,” Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1928), ch. 7, v. 62.
- ⁹ Ether 13:5.
- ¹⁰ Doctrine and Covenants 573. It is erroneous to use the term ‘center stake,’ for “how can the tent be a stake?” See Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, Doctrine and Covenants Commentary, rev. by Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Marion G. Romney (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950), p. 189.
- ¹¹ Isaiah 33:20.
- ¹² Ibid., 54:2.
- ¹³ Doctrine and Covenants 101:17, 20, 21.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 82:14.
- ¹⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 133:9.
- ¹⁶ Book of Mormon: I Nephi 2:20. See also II Nephi 1:5, 7, and Ether 2:7-10; 13:2, hereafter to be designated as “I Nephi,” etc.
- ¹⁷ Joseph Smith, History of the Church, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1946), VII, 318-19.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 322-23.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 321-22.
- ²⁰ Doctrine and Covenants 65:2.
- ²¹ The Millennial Star, XCII (1930), 713. It is stated, however, by church

authorities, that “the general conversion” of the nations of the earth “will take place during the millennium” for then “the Church will proclaim the Gospel . . . with greater power and with more success than before the advent of our Lord.” See Hyrum N. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary, rev. by Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold E. Lee, and Marion G. Romney (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950), pp. 160, 346.

²² Joseph Smith, “The Book of Moses,” Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1928), ch. 7, v. 18, 27, and 69. Hereafter this work will be simply referred to as “Moses” since it bears the same relationship to the Pearl of Great Price (a canonized work in the L.D.S. Church) as any of the books comprising the Holy Bible.

²³ Ibid. 7:18.

²⁴ II Samuel 5:7.

²⁴ see I Kings 8:1 and II Samuel 5:9.

²⁶ Talmage, op. cit., p. 347.

²⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 97:21.

²⁸ Taylor, op. cit., p. 245.

²⁹ Micah 4:1-2.

³⁰ Talmage, op. cit., p. 345. The term ‘mountain of the Lord’ or ‘mountains of the Lord’s house’ is of scriptural derivation, meaning in context a place where the Lord may come and be at rest with his people. Jerusalem is also designated. to become such a place, as stated: “let them who be of Judah flee unto Jerusalem, unto the mountains of the Lord’s house.” (Doc. & Cov. 131:13) Joseph Smith, in speaking of the center place of Zion and the government of God upon the American continent, stated that upon this land also the mountain of the Lord should be, and that it should be in the center of the land.” (See Joseph Smith, The History of the Church, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1946), pp. 318-9.) A further reference might be cited in Isaiah’s description of the millennial reign of peace under the Lord’s government, wherein he foretells: “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” (Isaiah 11:9). In this case the whole earth is referred to as a place where the Lord may be at rest with His people.

³¹ See Moses 1:33; 7:30 and Doctrine and Covenants 76:22-211.

³² Moses 7:31. (Italics supplied by the writer.)

³³ Doctrine and Covenants 105:5. In Moses 7:21 Enoch refers to Zion as being the Lord’s “abode forever.”

³⁴ Deuteronomy 18:15.

³⁵ Acts 3:22-23.

³⁶ Mark 13:26

³⁷ Acts 3:23

³⁸ Revelation 11:15.

³⁹ Daniel 7:27.

⁴⁰ Joseph Smith, “Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet,” Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

1928, ch. 2, v. 40. Hereafter reference from this work will be cited as “Smith 2.”

⁴¹ III Nephi 21:11-21.

⁴² Isaiah 60:2. According to Latter-day Saint teachings this chapter of Isaiah has a prophetic interpretation finding its fulfillment in the rise of Zion and her government in the latter days.

⁴³ Doctrine and Covenants 45:29.

⁴⁴ Matthew 55.

⁴⁵ Micah 4:3-4. See also III Nephi 21:11-29; 22:1-17.

⁴⁶ Acts 2:19-21.

⁴⁷ Smith, History of the Church, VI, 365.

⁴⁸ Cited in Preston Nibley, Joseph Smith the Prophet (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1944), p. 188.

⁴⁹ Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (3rd ed.; Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1938, p. 252.

⁵⁰ Joseph Smith, History of the Church, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1946), VI, 365. Arnold J. Toynbee, in discussing the historical significance of the efforts of the “would-be saviours with the sword” to establish a lasting peace, concluded that: “However cunning the hand that wields it, and however well-meaning the will that governs the hand, the sword can neither be compelled to bring salvation nor prevented from dealing the destruction which it is its nature to bring to pass. The would-be saviour with the sword is self-condemned to self-defeat.” -- A Study of History (3rd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), VI, 259-60. Again, this same author notes: “The truth seems to be that a sword which has once drunk blood cannot be permanently restrained from drinking blood again, any more than a tiger who has once tasted human flesh can be prevented from becoming a man-eater from that time onwards. The man-eating tiger is, no doubt, a tiger doomed to death; if he escapes the bullet he will die of the mange. Yet, even if the tiger could foresee his doom, he would probably be unable to subdue the devouring appetite which his first taste of man-meat has awakened in his maw; and so it is with the society that has once sought salvation through the sword.” Ibid., p. 196. Jesus, while in Gethsemane, made the appraisal that “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”-- Matthew 26:52.

⁵¹ Smith, History of the Church, I, 269.

⁵² Bp. Newel K. Whitney and counselors to the Saints abroad. Millennial Star, XVI, 86. For explanation of Daniel’s vision see Joseph Smith, History of the Church, I (Introduction), pp. xxxiv-xl.

⁵³ Doctrine and Covenants 58:7

⁵⁴ See ibid. 103:11-20; 105:9-19, 26-37; 136:10, 19.

⁵⁵ Daniel 7:13-14. (Italics added by writer.)

⁵⁶ See Doctrine and Covenants 6:6; 11:6; 12:6; 14:6; 39:13; 101:69-71, 7; 103:11-24, 34, 35; 105:27-29; 113:7-8; 115:5-6; 133:9.