

ONE HEART AND ONE MIND

Robert R. Worrell—Department of English

One often hears a familiar phrase used by members of the Church: “When we go back to Jackson County. . . .” This implies an expectation that is certainly not unfounded. Early in the history of the Church, the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that Zion, the New Jerusalem, would be established in Jackson County, Missouri.¹ The saints began gathering there, shortly after the organization of the Church, with the intention of building the city foreseen by the prophet Ether many centuries before. They had not been long established in that region, however, when bitter persecution befell them and, within a short time, drove them from the land of their inheritance. In a revelation, the Lord explained that the affliction came in consequence of their transgressions. The saints in general were not guilty of heinous crimes such as thievery, adultery, or murder. The sins that kept them from establishing the New Jerusalem were “jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires.”² In other words, they failed to restrain their selfish impulses and to have charity for each other, which “charity is the pure love of Christ.”³

Eventually, the early saints failed in their efforts to establish the Center Stake of Zion because they were “not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom”⁴ and had not learned that “Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom.”⁵ That may seem to be a stringent requirement, but it is nonetheless the irrevocable decree of the Lord and cannot be reversed. Thus it is inconsistent when saints today long for the return to Jackson County but do not yearn as fervently to be rid of jarring, contention, envy, strife, lustful desires, and covetousness.

After the saints had taken up their abode in the deserts of Utah, they still spoke often of returning to Jackson County. On one occasion, President Brigham Young instructed them with these words:

This is the land of Zion; but we are not yet prepared to go and establish the Center Stake of Zion. The Lord tried this in the first place. He called the people together to the place where the New Jerusalem and the great temple will be built, and where He will prepare for the City of Enoch. And He gave revelation after revelation; but the people could not abide them, and the Church was scattered and peeled, and the people hunted from place to place till, finally, they were driven into the mountains, and here we are. Now, it is for you and me to prepare to return back again; not to our fatherland, in many cases, but to return east, and by-and-by to build up the Center Stake of Zion. We are

The saints began gathering there, shortly after the organization of the Church, with the intention of building the city foreseen by the prophet Ether many centuries before.

not prepared to do this now, but we are here to learn until we are of one heart and of one mind in the things of this life.⁶

The questions that arise, then, are these: How can we prepare where we now are to build the New Jerusalem? What must we learn? What does it mean to be of “one heart and of one mind in the things of this life?” Perhaps the greatest hindrance to gaining answers to these questions comes from viewing the application of celestial principles to the things of this life only from the point of view of this life. Certain images and concepts from daily living, reinforced by almost constant contact with those who are of the world, tend to cloud the vision and are as hard for some people to overcome as the “traditions of their fathers, which are not correct.”⁷

An analogy may serve to illustrate. For example, Sarah, a third-grade student, following the example the grade-school teacher inscribes on the chalkboard, learns to draw mountains as symmetrical pyramids—vertical pieces of pie with a little whipped cream at the point. This concept, strongly reinforced as Sarah copies the image on paper and each subsequent time she draws mountains, stays embedded in her mind. Years later, in a college art class, Sarah is required to paint a picture of the Teton Peaks on site. She knows that the peaks have a unique form; nonetheless, in her painting they look very much like pieces of pie with a little whipped cream at the point. Try as she might to overcome it, Sarah’s conditioned response, learned in third grade, continues to override her reason. Extreme measures are required to break such habits, one of which is a willingness—indeed, a burning desire—to abandon old ways of looking at things and to see with a fresh eye. Sometimes, drawing from an image that is upside down will help. In the same way, learning to apply the principles of celestial law to the things of this world may best be done by first getting whatever view is possible of the celestial world and imposing that image upon this world rather than doing the reverse.

Even though very little has been revealed about the celestial kingdom, some important details have been given. For instance, it seems obvious from a search of the scriptures and the teachings of modern prophets that God the Father is possessor of all things. One could not go far enough into infinite space to find a place where He has no ownership and no authority.

The scriptures also teach that God appointed His Son, Jesus Christ, heir of all things.⁸ One cannot suppose this means that God will die and Jesus will then inherit everything the Father now possesses. The only thing it can mean is that the Son has ownership of the same infinitude that belongs to the Father. So whether the scriptures refer to the Father or the Son possessing all things, it makes no difference.

**Try as she might
to overcome it,
Sarah’s conditioned
response, learned
in third grade,
continues to
override her reason.**

In witness of this, we read in the Pearl of Great Price: “And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine. And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words.”⁹ And again, the Lord declares in the Doctrine and Covenants, “I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.”¹⁰

As “all things” belong to the Lord, so we belong to the Lord. Our bodies are His, but they are given to us as His caretakers or stewards to prove whether we will be faithful in the care of them and of the other temporal things he entrusts us with. This point is clarified by President Spencer W. Kimball, who said:

In the Church a stewardship is a sacred spiritual or temporal trust for which there is accountability. Because all things belong to the Lord, we are stewards over our bodies, minds, families, and properties. A faithful steward is one who exercises righteous dominion, cares for his own, and looks to the poor and needy.¹¹

Many of the Lord’s stewards have, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, obtained a hope in Christ—but what do they hope for? They hope for more, certainly, than to be saved from sin and to avoid punishment and misery. In addition to these benefits, a great reward awaits the faithful. Brigham Young alludes to it in these words:

All things belong to the Lord, and we belong to the Lord, and if we are faithful until we have passed the ordeal and proved ourselves worthy before the heavens to receive our crowns, then we shall receive a deed of that which the Lord gives to us. Until then, that which we hold we hold only as stewards for the Lord.¹²

So we shall receive from the Lord a deed. That implies ownership of something that was once only a stewardship, but to what property does the deed pertain? What will a faithful steward receive in the resurrection? The Lord says this: “. . .he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.”¹³ The Father has already given all that He has to Christ; now Jesus offers all that the Father has to every person who receives His servants and by so doing receives Him and His Father.

It becomes clear that “all things” are possessed not only by the Father and the Son but also by millions of other exalted beings—each one of whom is given everything that the Father possesses. All of these are gods,¹⁴ [not capitalized in Doctrine and Covenants] and they are all co-owners of everything in the infinite universe as a great brotherhood of priests, or priesthood. What we have heard about the law of consecration and the

**As “all things”
belong to the Lord,
so we belong to
the Lord.**

United Order is only a dim reflection of the order that exists among the celestial worlds. Elder Parley P. Pratt further illuminates this subject:

Every person knows, by reflection, that intelligence may be imparted without diminishing the store possessed by the giver. Therefore it follows, that millions of individual beings may each receive, all the attributes of eternal life, and light, and power.

Again it follows, that in the use of this power, by consent and authority of the Head, any one of these Gods [Elder Pratt uses the capital letter] may create, organize, people, govern, control, exalt, glorify, and enjoy worlds on worlds, and the inhabitants thereof; or, in other words, each of them can find room in the infinitude of space, and unoccupied chaotic elements in the boundless storehouse of eternal riches, with which to erect for himself thrones, principalities and powers, over which to reign in still increasing might, majesty and dominion, for ever and ever.

All these kingdoms, together with their Kings, are in subordination to the great Head and Father of all, and to Jesus Christ the first born, and first heir, among the sons of God.

All these kingdoms, with all their intelligences, are so many acquisitions to His dominion who is Lord of lords and King of kings, and of whom it is written by the Prophet Isaiah, "Of the increase of His kingdom there shall be no end."¹⁵

In this world, if I receive a deed to property, it has boundaries beyond which no other can legally pass—it is mine alone. But as before mentioned, we do not rightly impose the paradigm of this world upon the things of God. If I become an heir of exaltation, I cannot expect to get my own hundred acres of the universe that belongs exclusively to me. If that were the case, my kingdom would have limits, someday I would come to the end of it, and my growth would stop. The concept of eternal progression we are fond to speak of would be nullified. The Lord, however, has prepared something far more glorious for those who love Him, as Elder B. H. Roberts explains:

If I become an heir of exaltation, I cannot expect to get my own hundred acres of the universe that belongs exclusively to me.

This doctrine of Deity teaches a divine government for the world that is in harmony with our modern knowledge of the universe; for, as I have remarked elsewhere in effect: (*New Witness for God*, 473-5.) An infinitude of worlds and systems of worlds rising one above another in ever-increasing splendor, in limitless space and eternal duration, have, as a concomitant, an endless line of exalted, divine men to preside over and within them, as Priests, Kings, Patriarchs, Gods! Nor is there confusion, disorder, or strife in their vast dominions; for they all govern upon the same righteous principles that characterize the government of God everywhere. These Divine Intelligences have attained unto the excellence that Jesus prayed for in behalf of his apostles, and those who might believe

on their word, when he said: “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.” I say Divine Intelligences have attained unto the excellence of oneness that Jesus prayed his disciples might possess, and since they have attained unto it, and all govern their worlds and systems of worlds by the same spirit, and by the same principles, there is a unity in their government that makes it one even as they are one. Let worlds and systems of worlds galaxies of systems and universes, extend as they may throughout limitless space, Joseph Smith has revealed the existence of a divine government which, while characterized by unity, is co-extensive with all these worlds and world-systems.¹⁶

The exalted beings in that eternal world spoken of by Elder Roberts are one. They are of one heart and one mind, and they see eye to eye; therefore, there is neither disagreement nor disharmony among them. In order to become part of that society, the Lord’s children on this earth must learn to live in that way. Early attempts in this dispensation to live the law of consecration as a church and to establish the United Order were unsuccessful; nonetheless, the order of the celestial world has not changed; neither have the requirements for entering therein. Individuals are now charged with the responsibility to learn how to live the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom with the programs of the Church to help. The Lord has said:

... in consequence of the transgressions of my people, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion—That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands.¹⁷

The blessings that come from learning and living the law of the Lord are not available to the selfish and the carnally minded, but some such as the people of Enoch¹⁸ and the people of Melchizedek¹⁹ have obtained it. The Lord will grant it unto us as soon as we are ready for it, but we cannot bypass the requirements or substitute any amount of diligent but misguided effort²⁰ for them. In academic terms, one A paper is worth an A, but half a dozen C papers are still worth only a C. The Lord has said without equivocation, “For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things.”²¹ And further, “if ye are not one ye are not mine.”²² President Brigham Young further emphasized: “We should commence our labors of love and kindness with the family to which we belong; and then extend them to others. . . . The Latter-day Saints have got to learn that the interest of their brethren is their own interest, or they never can be saved in the celestial kingdom of God.”²³

All these injunctions have more to do with what the person is than with what the person does. Being equal in earthly things and putting

Early attempts in this dispensation to live the law of consecration as a church and to establish the United Order were unsuccessful; nonetheless, the order of the celestial world has not changed; neither have the requirements for entering therein.

the interest of others above one's own interest can be done only by individuals who are actually compassionate and humble. Feigning such virtues yields no good fruit.

Perhaps the Latter-day Saints, as a group, have some distance to go in this matter, but they are in a situation to “be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty.”²⁴ The Lord has commanded them to pay tithes and offerings as preparation to live the law of consecration and the United Order; however, outwardly consecrating one's goods and possessing all things in common does not make one an exalted being. Only the condition of the heart will determine that. A particular attitude must be cultivated and entrenched in the soul. Here are some of the guidelines:

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.²⁵

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.²⁶

[T]hey shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.²⁷

[T]he Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind.²⁸

And then there is this one, which tops them all:

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other *better* than themselves.²⁹

**That is a tall order,
but achieving
that state of mind
can create a Zion
society—a people
who are really ready
to dwell in the
celestial kingdom
while living on
this earth.**

That is a tall order, but achieving that state of mind can create a Zion society—a people who are really ready to dwell in the celestial kingdom while living on this earth. Enoch did it, Melchizedek did it, the Nephites and Lamanites at one point did it.³⁰ Of all places on the entire earth where such conditions could exist again, it seems that no community of Saints in the world has a better advantage than those at Brigham Young University-Idaho. In fact, it might even be said there are no disadvantages. The only thing that remains is for each individual to become a new creature—*really* a new creature—in Christ.³¹

If each employee were to put away petty envy and jealousy...

If each were to esteem the other as better than himself...

If each were to cease regarding that which belongs to none of us as “yours” and “mine”...

If competition for space, resources, and recognition could be placed upon the sacrificial altar for the benefit of all...

If all individuals were to become of one heart and one mind by drinking at the same fountain of truth...

What could happen?

Those who would become like God must learn to see each other through the eyes of God. When we see ourselves as God sees us, there is no room for pride. When we see others as God sees them, there is no room for enmity. When we come to see as He sees, then we will indeed be of one heart and one mind.

At Brigham Young University-Idaho, competition can give way to mutual support. Each person can learn to rejoice in the achievements of others without feeling diminished. Each one can be honest and valiant without seeking acclaim or honor. All can become of one heart and one mind by learning the same doctrine through the same Spirit and obeying the same principles. It is possible for each employee to become, in terms of obedience, like Jesus Christ. Such things have happened, they can happen, and here—of all places—they should happen. ∞

Each person can learn to rejoice in the achievements of others without feeling diminished.

NOTES:

- 1 Doctrine and Covenants 84:1-4; 101:70-71.
- 2 Doctrine and Covenants 101:6.
- 3 Moroni 7:47.
- 4 Doctrine and Covenants 105:4.
- 5 Doctrine and Covenants 105:5.
- 6 Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11 (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886), 324.
- 7 Mosiah 1:5.
- 8 Hebrews 1:2.
- 9 Moses 1:37-38.
- 10 Doctrine and Covenants 104:14.
- 11 Spencer W. Kimball, "Welfare Services: the Gospel in Action," *Ensign*, November 1977, 76-79.
- 12 Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10 (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886), 30.
- 13 Doctrine and Covenants 84:38 (35 - 38); See also Rev. 3:21.
- 14 Doctrine and Covenants 132:20.
- 15 Pratt, Parley P., *Key to the Science of Theology*, 10th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948), 36.
- 16 Roberts, B. H., ed., *The Seventy's Course in Theology* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1907), 199-200.
- 17 Doctrine and Covenants 105:9-10.
- 18 Moses 7:18-23.

- 19 JST Genesis 14:32-34.
20 3 Nephi 14:21-23; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.
21 Doctrine and Covenants 78:6.
22 Doctrine and Covenants 38:27.
23 Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, compiled by John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 271.
24 Doctrine and Covenants 105:10.
25 Doctrine and Covenants 59:6.
26 I John 2:9-10.
27 Isaiah 52:8.
28 Moses 7:18.
29 Philippians 2:2-3 (emphasis added).
30 4 Nephi 1:15-16.
31 2 Corinthians 5:17.