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## Joseph Smith as a Statesman

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# Joseph Smith as a Statesman

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## I.—JOSEPH SMITH, A RELIGIOUS LEADER

This year completes a century since the Prophet Joseph Smith received his first vision. It would appear that the date is sufficiently distant for us to obtain a proper perspective of the man, his teachings and his work. In the seven lessons or studies included in this series, an effort will be made to evaluate the Prophet Joseph Smith as a statesman in the larger sense. The first lesson will concern itself with Joseph Smith as a religious leader.

### *Position of a Religious Leader*

To be a great religious teacher and leader is undoubtedly the greatest achievement that can be attained by man, and to compare a man's teachings and works with the best religious standards, is the severest test to which they can be put. Often we envy the rich their possessions, but generally their names and possessions perish with them, and seldom do their lives or their teachings influence the world or the character of men for good. As a proof of this, it is only necessary to point out that the names of only one or two rich men survive in history, whereas a large number of religious men have impressed themselves upon human history. The greatest influence exercised in determining the life and works of nations have been the religious teachings of the prophets and leaders. So that the greatest statesman is the man who bases his teachings and messages on religious conceptions.

### *Great Religious Leaders*

The greatest religious teacher of all times is Jesus Christ, but being the Redeemer as well as a religious leader, it is hardly fair to compare others with him. Yet for nearly two thousand years, his life has been a living example for mankind, and hundreds of millions of human beings have been influenced to lead better lives by what he taught and did. The teachings of his Sermon on the Mount are of such a nature that if men and

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\*This is a series of seven lessons for the weekly joint meetings of the M. I. A. composed of all members above Junior age, which meetings are to be held in all the associations, from April 1 to the June conference, 1920.

nations lived up to them, wars, bloodshed and famine would immediately disappear from the earth, and men would live together in peace and in consideration of each other's welfare. Naturally the influence of the Savior of the world was the farthest reaching of any religious teacher. Others, however, not so great as the Christ, have exercised a tremendous influence upon the lives of men. For example, Moses, prophet, teacher and lawgiver, has influenced every legislature possibly that has ever convened, since his day. By many, Moses is regarded as the greatest lawgiver of all times. However, be that as it may, when he met the Lord on Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments, he handed down to men, the greatest code of laws ever put into force. They were and are the foundation and cornerstones of all other codes of law enacted by legislatures and parliaments ever since. They have stood the test of thousands of years without change and are as well suited to the activities of men today as they were when first given. It is impossible to measure the effect of the works and teachings of a great religious leader like Moses. The Ten Commandments, like Christ's Sermon on the Mount, we study from the cradle to the grave and they constantly influence our lives for good as well as giving us comfort and light on our way.

#### *Protestant Religious Leaders*

If we turn from the pages of sacred history to profane history, we find a proof of the great influence of religious men upon the people as witnessed by the rise of churches through teachings of Luther, Calvin, Knox and Wesley. When these men turned away from the Catholic Church and established Protestantism, thousands of their countrymen followed them, and their teachings have endured until the present time and their followers number hundreds of thousands.

#### *Mohammed, Buddha and Confucius*

For a moment let us turn from the splendid Christian examples and consider the lives of Mohammed, Buddha and Confucius. These men founded new religions and their followers today include such great nations as China, Japan, India and many other nations of Asia. Their converts are numbered by hundreds of millions and their influence upon mankind will undoubtedly endure forever and is immeasurable.

The foregoing are undoubtedly sufficient examples of what can be and has been accomplished by great religious leaders, and how much of their work is permanent for good. In their respective countries these men have not only partaken of the nature of religious leaders, but in the broadest sense they are to

be regarded as constructive statesmen who have had a vision as to what their countries should do and the effect of the religious life and works upon the welfare of the nation, and have attempted in the broadest sense to carry these policies into effect.

### *Work of Joseph Smith*

Our question now turns to the work of Joseph Smith. It is just one hundred years since he received his first vision, and ninety years since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized by this youth. If he had been any ordinary boy, controlled by ordinary influences, he would have become disheartened, discouraged, and would have discontinued the work, for from the very beginning he encountered the most strenuous and violent opposition. To the human understanding it is truly incomprehensible how a boy of fourteen could have stood up against the ridicule and persecution that were heaped upon him and directed against him, and go forward with his mission. Still he persisted, maintaining earnestly and sincerely that God had called him to the work and that it was his duty in spite of all opposition to carry it forward, even though it resulted in death. The persistency of his purpose and the spirit of his personality after a while won for him a hearing of a very few. In ten years from 1820 to 1830 he had found only a few persons who were willing to join with him in the organization of a new church. After the organization, new converts were made more rapidly and the new organization began to assume greater importance and its leader, the Prophet Joseph, to attract more attention, for it is only too true in religion as well as business and politics, that people notice men who reach the top and succeed in their undertakings.

### *The Prophet Sends Missionaries*

The Prophet, through revelation, sent missionaries to the different parts of the United States and Great Britain to preach the gospel. In many parts they were very successful in making converts who began to gather at first at Kirtland, Ohio. Persecution drove the leader and many of his followers from here to Independence, Missouri, and finally before the prophet's death, back to Illinois.

### *Persecution and Many Join Church*

During the strenuous organizing and proselyting period, thousands joined the Church, and at the same time many left the organization. As a whole, however, the increase in numbers and strength was very rapid, until, by 1840, the organiza-

tion in the minds of its opponents was assuming formidable proportions. Through it all, persecution was continuous and strong, even breaking out in mobocracy and murder, so that men did not join the Latter-day Saints or accept the leadership of Joseph Smith with an idea of obtaining ease, comfort or affluence, but only through a firm conviction of the divinity of his leadership and mission. During it all and through it all, he was the acknowledged religious leader, upon whom all the faithful relied and it was due to the fact that he was a divinely inspired prophet, leader and an outstanding and upstanding man whose vision as to the future was great and dependable. In his own words, "I secured followers because I possessed the principle of love," a necessary attribute of a great religious leader. At the time of his death, the figures as to the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not available, but perhaps twenty-five to thirty thousand is a very conservative estimate. At all events, it shows a remarkable growth.

#### *Accomplishment of Joseph Smith*

To those who are skeptical, through prejudice or for other reasons, of the statement that Joseph Smith is one of the greatest American religious leaders, if not the greatest, it may be profitable to make a short comparison. The number of converts he made during his life was many times greater than those made by Jonathan Edwards, Henry Ward Beecher or Bishop Brooks, not to mention the tens of thousands of converts to the "Mormon" system since his death, for which he is indirectly if not directly responsible. The aforementioned men are regarded as great religious leaders. They, however, followed along the beaten paths of established religions, while Joseph Smith, before making many converts, had to found a church and declare its principles. He suffered opposition in practically everything he undertook to do and accomplished his work in spite of it. In addition to doing his religious work, he colonized new lands, built cities, and prepared the way for the founding of a great western commonwealth. No other great American religious leader can show such a record or begin to compare with him in actual accomplishments.

#### *The Prophet's Christian Conduct.*

Irrespective of whether men agree or disagree upon the achievements of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the facts are that he established a good, vigorous Church, which has increased in strength from its beginning and which is more thrifty and prosperous now than ever before. He gathered people from all

parts of the earth and organized and prepared them for the great westward exodus. His undertakings and accomplishments are without parallel in American life. Finally he suffered a martyr's death and yet through it all he attempted to treat his enemies with love and Christian kindness, and rather than suffer bloodshed he preferred that the Saints relinquish all their earthly possessions and move to the western wilderness.

The life of man, however, at the longest is very short, and this was doubly true of the Prophet's life, which was cut short by his being martyred, and a man's personal teachings cannot extend very far except as he writes them down where they can live forever. In this way mainly can a great religious leader make his influence permanent. It would be impossible to select from the Doctrine and Covenants and other Church works the numerous splendid sayings and teachings of the Prophet Joseph, it is even sometimes difficult to determine which is the best, and in the short space allotted to this lesson, only a few quotations can be used. They are selected from the Prophet's speeches and from the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants. Their value can be appreciated by comparison with the teachings of other religious leaders which it is hoped the reader will make.

### *Teachings of the Prophet.*

"The cause of human liberty is the cause of God."

"All men will be raised from the grave by the power of God, having spirit in their bodies and not blood."

"All children are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ."

Asked how he governed the people, the prophet answered,

"I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves."

"Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold he that hath eternal life is rich." Doc. and Cov. 6:7.

"And if you have not faith, hope and charity, you can do nothing." Doc. and Cov. 18:19.

"Contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil." Doc. and Cov. 18:20.

"Let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me." Doc. and Cov. 38:24.

"Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor nor do him any harm." Doc. and Cov. 42:27.

"Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer." Doc. and Cov. 42:42.

"If thy brother or sister offend thee, thou shalt take him or her between him or her and thee alone; and if he or she confess, thou shalt be reconciled." Doc. and Cov. 42:88.

The foregoing are some of the principles that the Prophet Joseph Smith instilled into his followers. He saw with a prophet's vision and a statesman's acumen, that the religious life and inspiration were the greatest influences in the development of a

genuine citizenship. He saw that through this influence his followers would become devoted citizens of the country of which they were a part. The statesmanship of his teachings was illustrated in the recent world war where the devotion of his followers was tested in going forth to battle in full faith in their religion and with unquestioned integrity in the nation. No conscientious objectors, no slackers, whether for men or money, were found among the "Mormons," and the statesmanship of Joseph Smith in instilling in his followers a religious respect for the laws and the divinity of the institutions of their country was put to the greatest test and vindicated.

He saw that religion was the great force working for happiness and betterment of humanity, and that it was the only safe foundation for community life, and that governmental stability lay in religious training and in a firm faith in God. Statesmen the world over realize the truth of this fact today as never before.

### *Questions.*

- (1) Why is the position of religious leader so important?
- (2) In what way have religious leaders influenced the world?
- (3) How did the boy Joseph Smith have so much power?
- (4) What are your reasons for claiming Joseph Smith a great religious leader?
- (5) How did the prophet exhibit the principle of love?
- (6) How does religious feeling affect citizenship?

## II.—JOSEPH SMITH, A HOME BUILDER

### *Importance of Home*

The home is the foundation of the nation and of society. All great races, nations and peoples in all ages have driven their roots deep into the soil, and agriculture, in the broadest sense, has always been the predominating industry. All great statesmen in every age have used every means possible to establish their people on the soil and give them ownership of the land. At the present time, modern nations are very solicitous about the welfare of primary industries, and agriculture in particular. Under the primary industries, we include agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and mining. Mining in this particular has special reference to coal and iron. The late world war has shown the nations not only how their superiority in war, but their very existence is dependent upon the success of these primary industries, and if they are not well developed within the boundaries of a nation, that nation becomes dependent upon other nations, and is compelled by means of military and naval forces to keep open the avenues of trade.

*Importance of Agriculture*

A moment's reflection brings clearly before the mind the necessity of a national policy that will support agricultural productivity. Human beings must have food, clothing and heat in order to exist in the temperate zones. Without such supplies, they will perish in a very short time. Food, clothing and fuel come from the soil. Grains and vegetables cannot be produced in any other manner than by seeding and cultivating the earth. When man has done his work and nature has completed her task, the grains may be ground by the mill and treated by manufacturing processes to make them suitable for food, but the soil must do its work first. Likewise in the case of heat, much fuel is obtained from the forests of the earth. Of course, coal, among modern nations, is the great heat and power producer, but it also must be dug out of the earth and, broadly speaking, without it a vast majority of factories would be shut down for want of power and cities thrown into darkness for want of light. The work of the factory, so to speak, is to carry forward the work of the farm and forest, by taking the raw material produced on the farm and in the forest and transforming these products into commodities suitable for the use of man. Foods, clothing and fuel, therefore, are the first lines of defense and are essential to the physical welfare of men and women. But they are not the only essential things.

As man studies nature, he comes more and more to know God. Apparently, in the world's history, this study of God has been carried forward in the great deserts and wildernesses and in the country, with more success than in the cities. Many religions like Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, originated in the country. So in the study of human history from every standpoint, the country holds a predominant place.

*Cultural Side of Agriculture*

Agriculture, however, is not alone valuable because it supplies us with food and clothing, for it has likewise a cultural side. Almost every science known to man is involved in its processes, and the agriculturist can keep in better touch with the fundamental forces of nature than a man engaged in any other activity. So that many of the great fundamental principles involved in science have been studied and developed on the farm. Men may live without schools and without books but they cannot live without an understanding of nature and its products, so that most of the nations, including our own, are making strenuous efforts to improve rural life and to encourage rural people to remain on the farm. In order to do this, large appropriations are made by parliaments and legis-



latures for the upbuilding of the industry. The preservation of the rural communities and of agriculture is a national, social, economic and religious problem.

*Avoids Large Cities.*

Holding in mind this large view of rural life, it will be interesting to know how the Prophet Joseph Smith viewed it. Many sects originated in his day and the leaders together with their followers, lost themselves in the large cities of the nation and became unknown. The Prophet Joseph might likewise have led his followers into the large cities where they, too, would undoubtedly have lost their identity, but he realized the value of the country and the stabilizing influence of land ownership upon the life and character of the individual, and as a consequence his converts were advised to settle upon the land and as far as possible become possessed of homes and farms.

The Church was organized in 1830, and the first place of settlement was Kirtland. Here the Saints began to obtain land and established themselves upon it. Within a short time, persecution grew so strong that they were compelled to move and they located at Independence, Missouri. The Lord, by revelation, had designated Missouri as the gathering place and the New Jerusalem of the Saints. Doctrine and Covenants, Section 45:64-66, reads as follows:

64. "Wherefore I, the Lord, have said, gather ye out from the Eastern lands, assemble ye yourselves together, ye elders of my Church; go ye forth into the Western countries, call upon the inhabitants to repent, and inasmuch as they do repent, build up churches unto me.

65. "And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you,

66. "And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the Saints of the most high God."

Several months before the expulsion from Kirtland, the Saints began to gather at Independence and buy land as the Lord had commanded. Section 101:70-71, reads:

"Which saith, or teacheth, to purchase all the lands by money, which can be purchased for money, in the region round about the land which I have appointed to be the land of Zion, for the beginning of the gathering of my Saints.

"All the land which can be purchased in Jackson county, and the counties round about, and leave the residue in mine hand."

*Land and Home Owners in Jackson County*

They were rapidly building homes when persecution again overtook them. In 1833 and '34 they were expelled from Jackson county, Missouri, so that a little more than two short

years were all that was allowed them to buy and improve their lands, yet at the time of their departure, they owned between two and three hundred thousand dollars' worth of land and about a million dollars worth of property. The Latter-day Saints still hope to return to Jackson county, Missouri, and repossess their lands. When they do, however, it will not be in the manner in which they were dispossessed, but by the orderly processes of purchase for full value, and then legally, and as the owners desire to sell.

### *Home Owners in Illinois and Utah*

The Saints were finally driven from Misosuri into Illinois. Upon arrival there they began immediately to acquire lands and cultivate them and to build homes. In this they were very successful, and when they were driven from Illinois in 1846, Brigham Young in a communication dated October 1, 1845, to General Hardin and others, says, "We have some hundreds of farms and some two thousand or more homes for sale in the county (Hancock)," showing that the Latter-day Saints had been very diligent in building homes during the few years that they had been permitted to live in the state of Illinois. From Illinois the Saints came to Utah. Brigham Young had succeeded Joseph Smith as the leader, but the same spirit permeated the Church organization. Brigham Young knew the Prophet's estimate of planting the people on the soil and establishing them in their own homes and he was in full sympathy with it. Just as soon as Salt Lake Valley was reached and the food supply was provided for, assignments of lots were made and every family as soon as possible made an earnest effort to build a home of its own, even if it was nothing more than a log house or an adobe hut. A small farm of five or ten acres in extent, in the "Big Field" of eight thousand acres, was awarded to every family and as rapidly as the Mormon settlers arrived, they were assigned a lot and a piece of farm land. In the spring of 1848, less than a year after their arrival, upwards of 400 log houses and adobe huts had been built inside the "Old Fort," over five thousand acres had been brought under cultivation, thus carrying out without delay the spirit of the Prophet Joseph in reference to the ownership and cultivation of the soil.

### *Days of '49 in Utah*

The difficulty, however, was not yet over. The days of '49 were at hand, when thousands of gold seekers, crossing the plains and the mountains to reach the gold fields of California, stopped at Salt Lake to replenish their food supply. Soon the

spirit of gold digging grew strong among the Saints, and many of them desired to go to California to acquire a fortune, on the Pacific Coast. Again the spirit of the Church from the very beginning spoke through Brigham Young, and the Saints were strongly advised to remain here and hold on to their lands. Most of them followed the advice, and the development and settlement of Utah became an assured fact. The wisdom of this advice was soon demonstrated, for the great majority of the men who went to dig gold in California, lost their health in sluicing gold in the cold mountain waters and found the returns for their efforts very small. The great profits of the gold digging industry went primarily to the traders and speculators. It must not be understood that the Church leaders were opposed to mining, but they felt that the time for mining in Utah was not opportune and they wanted to make sure of the success of their great undertaking and establish first a commonwealth and the most important industry, and likewise provide themselves with food against any emergency. Never was the spirit of the prophet and the judgment of Brigham Young better vindicated than in the advice to the Saints to keep their land. It took a great many years to demonstrate its truth and to realize the value of Utah farm lands, but the last twenty years have shown that the family that owns its own home and possesses a good farm, has the means of providing itself with a good, substantial living and in addition has something to pay for the education of its children. As a result of these teachings and this policy, the Latter-day Saints as a whole are a community of home building people, and tenancy except as a temporary means, has found little support among them. This policy has given to the settlement of the Saints a strong economic stability and instilled into the young people the idea of early marriages and the establishment of a home, vindicating in its entirety the statesmanship of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

#### *Questions*

- (1) How important is the home?
- (2) What is the importance of agriculture?
- (3) How is agriculture and science related?
- (4) How would large cities likely have affected the Church?
- (5) Why was it desirable for the Saints to become land owners?
- (6) How did the days of '49 affect the Saints?

### III.—JOSEPH SMITH, AN ADVOCATE OF LAW AND ORDER

#### *Two Classes*

Ever since Cain slew his brother Abel for a real or imaginary wrong, there have been two divisions of the human family,

one contending that the wrongs of human society should be adjusted according to the orderly processes of law, and the other class contending that all wrongs, imaginary or real, should not wait for an orderly process, but should be adjusted by violent action, and that the advocates of this doctrine should constitute the body to determine what is right or wrong. Both classes are to be found in all countries and in all ages. One makes for order and progress and the other for destruction. Every advance step that civilization has made, has been through the efforts of the class that stands for and in favor of orderly procedure. Of course, there are extraordinary occasions when governments are tyrannical and oppressive that the people are justified in rising up in revolution and changing the system. Such occasions, however, are rare in human history and cannot arise when the people control the governments and can correct any wrong through the orderly process of the ballot box. The means of revolution can only be justified under the tyranny of a despotic ruler or government. Every free government like our own can be changed by its people in an orderly, constitutional and legal way by the voters so that there can be no justification for revolutionary methods. Those who desire a change need only to convert a majority of the people to their point of view, and the change can be brought about without doing violence to any of the established institutions. This is true even though the change is unreasonably radical. Yet there are a considerable number of people all over the world at the present time who are not willing to await the time when they can convert people to their point of view, but they want an immediate change and the adoption of their ideas, even though the advocates constitute only a small minority of the population, and would enforce their ideas upon the majority by violence, even by bloodshed if necessary. Some of the proposed changes they desire to make are very far reaching and would abolish the right of individuals to a very great extent, without even waiting to ask them if they are willing, or without going through the process of taking a vote. Personal rights, the right of free speech, the right of trial by jury and the establishment of representative government, have been a long time in coming into existence and have been acquired only at the cost of much bloodshed and many bitter struggles extending over centuries. The right of private property is likewise an institution of long growth and the result of ages of experience and numerous experiments. Undoubtedly this right has often been abused, but on the whole it has been of unqualified benefit in the progress of the race. These radical reformers would abolish it over night, and even imprison the owners and

deprive them of their civil rights, because they had been so fortunate as to acquire a small amount of property. Just at present every government has to contend with the activities of this class. A good example of this class in the United States is found in the Industrial Workers of the World, commonly called I. W. W.'s.

### *Latter-day Saints Not Law Breakers*

The Latter-day Saints, have on many occasions been accused, by those unacquainted with the facts, of being law breakers and it has been attributed to the influence of their religion. The truth of the matter is that the Latter-day Saints are unusually strong in favor of law and order, and the best evidence of this statement is the fact that the revolutionary propaganda, now advocated in different parts of the world, finds few or no supporters among the "Mormon" people. This is due primarily to the fact that the religion believed in and practiced by them and established by Joseph Smith, teaches obedience to law and order.

### *Religion Against Lawlessness*

Article Twelve of the Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints says: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates, and in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." A more explicit statement in favor of obedience to government cannot be found. In fact in the creeds of few churches is found such a definite statement as this.

### *Church Writings Against Lawlessness*

Reinforcing this article of faith, is a revelation given by the Lord to Joseph Smith on Feb. 9, 1831, in which are enumerated several offenses for which the offenders should be turned over to the laws of the land. Sec. 42:79, 84-86. Again, in another revelation recorded in Section 101, 76-80, the Lord says:

76. "And again I say unto you, those who have been scattered by their enemies, it is my will that they shall continue to importune for redress, and redemption, by the hands of those who are placed as rulers, and are in authority over you,

77. "According to the laws and constitution of the people which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles. \* \* \*

79. "Therefore, it is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another.

80. "And for this purpose have I established the constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood."

In these verses the Lord clearly indicates that the constitution of the United States is an inspired document, and this being true, how could the people claiming to be inspired by the Lord, stand out and violate constitutional laws when they were justly enforced?

In verses 85 to 88 of the same section, the Lord advises the Latter-day Saints that they shall importune the judges and governors and the president that justice might be done them, but in no case and in no place does he advocate violence for the attainment of their rights. In a revelation given August, 1831, the Lords says: "Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land." Doc. and Cov. 58:21.) This declaration is sufficiently clear and explicit to leave no doubt in the minds of those who are conversant with conditions to understand what spirit governs the Latter-day Saints. But for fear that there are those who are not familiar with the facts, a review of a few of the events in the early history of the Church and the life of the Prophet Joseph will possibly clear away some misconceptions.

In the second lesson, we called attention to the fact that the Lord, in a revelation, advised the Saints upon entering Jackson county, to purchase the land that they desired. In no instance did he suggest that they take it without compensation, but advised that it be acquired in a legal way and for full value received. This should be a sufficient answer to those who believe that it is perfectly proper to confiscate people's property without compensation.

#### *Driven Out of Jackson County*

The Saints left Kirtland on account of persecution and went to Jackson county, Missouri, where through diligence and thrift they acquired large tracts of land and considerable other property. Persecution developed against them, and even though the Saints were much stronger than they were in Kirtland, and undoubtedly if they had resorted to armed resistance might have protected their life and property to a great extent, under the counsel of the Prophet Joseph, they endeavored to follow a more peaceful course. Joseph Smith counseled them to obey the laws of the state, and even when other settlers in Missouri had decided to drive the "Mormons" out by violence and to confiscate their property, they were very loath to do anything except to apply to the lawful authorities of the county for protection. Any reader of the indignities heaped upon the Saints at this time, would certainly feel that they had sufficient reason to protect themselves by every means possible

But a contrary course was pursued and on Sept. 28, 1833, President Joseph Smith, addressed a communication to Governor Daniel Dunklin of Missouri asking for protection and the enforcement of the laws of the state so that the difficulties existing between the Latter-day Saints and the original settlers could be adjusted in the courts. This was certainly a most reasonable request and one well within the constitution of the state of Missouri and the constitution of the United States. The governor, however, referred the petition to the attorney general who was at that time absent from the capital, causing thereby a long delay in a situation which required immediate attention. A reply was not received from the governor until October 26, almost a month after the petition had been presented. The reply suggested that the Saints refer their difficulties to the circuit judge for consideration, and in case the court failed to act, the governor promised to help. Upon the receipt of this communication, the courts were appealed to, but the judge even refused to issue a warrant on complaint. During all this delay the mob was upon them, murdering, looting and destroying their property. In this situation, to be deprived of the protection of the law, it is easily understood why the Saints should undertake to defend themselves by armed force. Then it was that Lieutenant Governor Boggs organized the mob into a militia under Colonel Thomas Pitcher and the Saints were put in a position of resisting the military forces of the state. This was an unsatisfactory situation for them to be in, and when Col. Pitcher promised the Saints full protection, they surrendered their arms. No sooner, however, had they given up their arms, than the militia fell upon the Saints, murdering several of them and stealing their property. Under these circumstances, they were compelled to leave Jackson county until such time as they felt their lands and other property would be legally restored to them. From Jackson county they went to Clay county and to other parts of the state. The same bitter feeling, however, had spread pretty much over Missouri, and in a short time a committee of the citizens of Clay county, called upon them and demanded that they leave. During all this long interval the suffering Saints had appealed to the courts and to the governor and even to the president of the United States for redress and the restoration of their property, but their appeals went unheard.

Joseph Smith under these trying circumstances, advised the Saints to be obedient and do whatever they could under the law to obtain their rights. In a revelation given to Joseph Smith, June 22, 1834, the Saints were advised to seek peace: "And again I say unto you, sue for peace, not only the

people that have smitten you, but also to all people." (Doc. and Cov. 105:38.) This certainly is the embodiment of Christian teachings as applied to the practical affairs of life.

### *Driven Out of Clay County*

On June 22, 1836, the committee of the citizens of Clay county, governed largely by the prejudices that were shown by the people of the state, requested them to leave the county. President Joseph Smith was in the east looking after the affairs of the Church when this demand was made. A committee of the citizens called upon a committee appointed by the "Mormons" to represent them, and in the course of their conversation they said, "We do not contend that we have the least right under the constitution and laws of the country to expel you by force." This was certainly a strange admission for them to make, and the question naturally arises: then, under what right did they demand them to leave except by brute force? The committee of the Saints realizing the seriousness of the situation, entered into an agreement with the citizens promising to leave Clay county and they faithfully kept their agreement though entered into by force.

### *The Prophet Advises Peace*

The prophet in the east, hearing of the Saints' suffering, wrote a letter to them advising every possible peaceful solution, and at all hazards to protect the women and children. After several unsuccessful attempts to settle in other parts of Missouri, the Saints were compelled to move out of the state and into Illinois. In the new state, Nauvoo was made the central point of settlement, and it looked for a while as if they would enjoy peace, but the mobocratic spirit broke out again and the situation became critical. Upon the organization of Nauvoo into a city, the state of Illinois had granted a charter in which the city was authorized to establish and maintain companies of soldiers. In accordance with this provision the city council authorized the organization of the Nauvoo Legion, and in 1844 there were something like 2,000 well trained soldiers in the organization. In a meeting just before the death of the prophet, they pledged themselves, to protect him and the Saints, but upon the request of Governor Ford and upon the advice of Joseph Smith, June 24, 1844, the legion was dissolved and disarmed. The prophet could now see that the situation was critical in Nauvoo and in the hopes that further trouble might be avoided until such time as the Saints could move westward, he, Hyrum Smith, John Taylor, Willard Richards and a few other friends, crossed the Mississippi into Iowa. His plan was to proceed to



the Rocky Mountains and there prepare for the Saints. He thought that his absence from Nauvoo would relieve the situation and prevent further persecution. Upon the call of his people; however, he returned and surrendered to the officers of the law. Various charges were made against him, and the governor of Illinois, promised him protection and a fair trial, neither of which he received. The story of his imprisonment in Carthage is so well known that it is unnecessary to recite it here. It must be borne in mind that Joseph Smith, as he had done repeatedly before, surrendered, to submit his case to the courts of the state of Illinois. He was putting in practice, at extreme peril, what he had taught his people, and while doing so was murdered. His example of fortitude and loyalty to the institutions of his country made a deep impression upon the Latter-day Saints and remains with them today. He, therefore, could not be accused of being a violator of the law, but was the victim of the violators of the law.

During the life of Joseph Smith he was arrested and tried, some fifty times, but each time he was acquitted. Surely if he had been a law breaker the courts, often controlled by his enemies, would have been able to find him guilty of some offense at one time or another, but in each instance they failed and he was acquitted. It is easy to commend the forces of law and order when they work for our protection and benefit. It, however, takes a great statesman to stand for law and order even when administered by our enemies and to our detriment. It is a recognition of the great fundamental idea that individual welfare must be sacrificed for the benefit of the community and the general principles of law, lest we all perish by mobocracy. It takes a great man and a great statesman to get this view as did the Prophet Joseph. For such was the large view held and taught by Joseph Smith and put into practice during his life and at the expense of his life.

### Questions

- (1) What two classes of citizens are found under all governments?
- (2) What are the teachings of the religion of the Latter-day Saints in respect to law and order?
- (3) How did Joseph Smith by his conduct show that he wanted to act in a legal way?
- (4) How were the Saints required to secure their lands?
- (5) Why did the Saints leave Jackson and Clay counties?
- (6) In the face of persecution what was the prophet's advice?
- (7) On what grounds did Joseph surrender to the state authorities of Illinois?

*(To be continued in May Era. See next page)*

*Notice to M. I. A. Joint Classes.* These lessons will be continued in the *Era*, until the series of seven are printed. Following are the titles of the remaining four: 4. Joseph Smith, a Candidate—His Platform. 5. Joseph Smith, a Nationalist. 6. Joseph Smith, a Practical Sociologist. 7. Joseph Smith, a Patriot.

*Elder A. Earl Worlton*, writing from Albany, New York, recently, says: "All who read the *Era* in this section of the country think it a most excellent magazine for the furtherance of truth."

*Frank O. Jones*, Secretary of the Netherlands mission, writing from Rotterdam, Holland, November 25, says: "We appreciate the *Era* very highly. It is full of snappy articles, easily understood, not monotonous and long-drawn, interesting and extremely beneficial to all who read them, old and young alike. After reading the *Era*, we distribute the magazine among those of our Dutch friends who understand the English language. They are quite as anxious as the elders are to get them. We wish the *Era* success."

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