

The Gathering:

OR,

THE PLANS AND PRINCIPLES

That Should Govern

LATTER DAY SAINTS

GENERALLY IN ORGANIZING SETTLEMENTS IN THE "REGIONS
ROUND ABOUT THE LAND OF ZION."

BEING ALSO

THE INITIATORY STEP TOWARD ORGANIZING THE "COMMON SENSE
MUTUAL AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION" ACCORDING TO THE
RECEIVED DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS
CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.

By I. N. W. COOPER.

Labor Conquers all Things.

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THE GATHERING.

SENTIMENT :

He who defrauds the poor, or facilitates not his righteous endeavors in providing for his family, would disinherit the Almighty. "The poor is God's heritage."

Labor and all marketable merchandise are capital. Money is a vehicle for the convenient exchange of capital.

"Labor is the bedrock of finance" and the only true wealth of any people.

Every institution, or organization, may have within itself the means of its own perpetuity, or the ingredients of its own destruction.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is an institution, or organization, properly so called; and its characteristics are such

as to distinguish it from every other organization among men.

It is not only a religious order transcending every other of its kind in the systematic arrangement and the comprehensive design of its organs, but it is pre-eminently a Co-operative, Mutual Aid, Beneficial Society.

The leading characteristics of this institution which mark it as a creature of divine origin, without descending to details in their delineations, are providing for the poor, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ without charge, and the gathering of the people.

That these designs may be accomplished, depends altogether upon *our* observance of the *social* demands of these *temporal* requirements; and herein are contained the seeds that must eventually work out in the coherency, consistency, and perpetuity of the work; or terminate in its disintegration.

There should be either no necessity for this production, or there should be no necessity for its apology. The languishing of Zion in her scattered condition; the oppression of the poor under the lash of their task-masters; the great famine for the word of God, and the almost abortive efforts of the ministry to keep in the field, *loudly proclaim* the *necessity* for

this movement; therefore, an apology would be superfluous.

It being my firm conviction when first uniting with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints that the looking after the poor, and the preaching the gospel without price, were the two great works that should ever characterize a people chosen of God; and believing from the doctrines set forth by this people, as well as from testimonies received that this is the church and kingdom of God, prompts me to go forward in this measure; for it is painfully apparent that the first of these is entirely overlooked, or tacitly ignored; while the second is but feebly maintained, or at best its *execution* is on the decline.

Believing that the *rich* will never in a becoming manner lay to their means for the benefit of the poor; and in view of the near approach of the end, as forshadowed by the signs of the times, I have determined to set on foot a means for the *commencement of the "beginning of the gathering,"* by organizing, if possible, a company of men of moderate means who are willing to unite, and work together toward a common end, as will hereinafter be stated; or, if unsuccessful in organizing a company, I propose to purchase a location with acquired and borrowed means, and conduct it agreeably

to the following *plan of business*, which is submitted for the benefit of individuals who, and churches that may desire to co-operate in the great work of the last days.

PLAN OF BUSINESS AND STATEMENT OF
PRINCIPLES:

For the government of agents or companies purchasing lands in the "regions round about the land of Zion."

First. The name of this company shall be, "*The Common Sense Mutual Agricultural Association.*"

Second. The officers shall be such as the circumstances demand, and shall be the creation of those concerned.

Third. Money may be obtained by borrowing at an interest not exceeding six per cent, and for a period of not less than two years.

Fourth. The amount borrowed by an agent, not acting for a branch, or district, shall not exceed \$10,000. The amount borrowed by a company must be regulated by the company.

Fifth. The amount of money borrowed must be invested in *real estate*, land not including improvements.

Sixth. All improvements must be the result of personal or "labor capital."

Seventh. All the lands, with all the improvements, together with all property possessed by the (agent or) Company shall be security for money borrowed.

Eighth. This Company shall have power to sue and be liable to be sued; and may, or may not have a corporate seal.

Ninth. All donations shall be faithfully applied to whatever is designated by the donor; provided, the specification does not require any irregular transaction.

Tenth. There shall be various funds established to which donations, or for which deposits may be made; such as, "*home fund*" for the poor, all of which shall be expended for the purchase of land for the poor; *traveling elder's fund*: which shall be expended in the support of *families* of *Elders* constantly in the field; *settler's fund*: which shall be understood to be for the purchase of, or improvement of lands for those who wish to purchase land for themselves, with a view to settling themselves or some others on the same.

Eleventh. All useful branches of business shall be established at as early a day as practicable, and on a scale with each branch of

business to suit the wants and conditions of the Company, and those engaging in such business.

Twelfth. The object of establishing the various branches of business is to make *labor capital*, and every individual a producer, and therefore a contributor to the general wealth, and each branch of business a resource.

Thirteenth. The object of producing funds is, first, to accomplish the purchase of the regions round about; second, to support families of Elders traveling in the ministry; third, to provide for the poor.

Fourteenth. The regions round about should be bought on a joint compound principle of purchase, viz., that all lands should be put under immediate cultivation, and all surplus proceeds of cultivation be applied in purchasing new lands for homes for those who labor to improve the same.

This compound principle of purchase could be joint; that is, it would be consistent with revelation in D. & C., p. 269 and 270, sec. 98, paragraphs 9 and 10: "Now, verily I say unto you, let all the churches gather together all their moneys; let these things be done in their time, be not in haste; and observe to have all things prepared before you. And let honora-

ble men be appointed, even wise men, and send them to purchase these lands; and every church in the eastern countries when they are built up, if they will hearken unto this counsel, they may buy lands and gather together upon them, and in this way they may establish Zion."

Sec. 100, par. 6, p. 278. Companies of tens, twenties, fifties or hundreds to go up to the land of Zion to locate lands round about, and inasmuch as it is performed for the benefit of the church it will be a joint purchase, although each agent should purchase for his respective branch independently.

Fifteenth. The families of all Elders traveling in the ministry should be well provided for, and in a manner that they would not feel themselves in anywise to be paupers, or as dependent on the benevolence of the people.

This could be so successfully done that it would be almost imperceptibly felt, and we would soon have a corps of effective ministers in the field whose time and talents would be undivided.

Sixteenth. The poor should be judiciously provided for. None will be encouraged to settle with the colony for the first year; except those who are able to maintain themselves for one year, or until crops can be harvested;

thereafter labor capital will be the basis upon which every deserving poor man must stand and by which he will be assisted to a home and a tract of land of his own. It will be the duty of the company to give, and the privilege of the poor to receive land in exchange for labor, which they can improve upon and increase, without the burden of heavy interest and with all the benefits of co-operation enjoyed by the company. Every individual must be considered as an unit of and an equal in society.

It is not contemplated in this gathering into the regions round about, to establish the laws of tithing or consecration, or to make absolute equality in goods or property, or to appoint inheritances, or to establish the storehouse of the Lord. *It is intended* to purchase the land, provide for the poor, support the ministry and see that none of the Lord's people suffer from want, neglect or abuse; and to be a means of preparing the Saints for the laws of tithing and consecration, and for equality, without which we never can become one in the Lord, build his temple, or become Zion. Sec. 77, par. 1; sec. 81, par. 4. Neither can Zion be redeemed. Sec. 51, par. 1; sec. 102, par. 2. Neither can we become dis-

ciples of Christ without providing for the poor. Sec. 52, par. 9.

It is, in other words, the beginning of the gathering, which implies that churches which are established should gather in different places by buying land in regions round about, (sec. 58, par. 11; sec. 98, pars. 9, 10), and send workmen there to labor, sec. 58, par. 12.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

First. We believe that no church titles, or sacred names of any kind, should be adopted as or incorporated in, the names of companies; unless they are so directed by revelation, or they are willing and able to carry into effect the principles such names involve and imply, and are willing to suffer the penalties attached for their violation. See D. & C., sec. 102, par. 2; sec. 56, par. 5; sec. 51, par. 1; sec. 77, par. 3; sec. 81, pars. 4, 5; sec. 89; sec. 101, pars. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Second. We believe that each company should and could be, not only a self-sustaining, but a progressive, beneficial, independent organization.

Third. We believe it to be consistent with reason and revelation to proceed in a quiet, unassuming, yet business-like manner to pur-

chase all the land in the regions round about Zion. We further believe that every legitimate manner of procuring means is justifiable. See D. & C., sec. 48, pars. 1, 2; sec. 58, par. 11; sec. 57, pars. 2, 4, 5; sec. 98, par. 10.

Fourth. We believe to gather quietly, so far as the Church is nominally concerned, is eminently wise and judicious, and in harmony with the spirit of the revelations, especially for the present; for the reason, that at the present time it is contrary to the State laws of Missouri for any church to hold extensive landed property within her borders. Therefore, it is beautifully consistent for the different branches to send agents, and to buy and hold the land in the names of their agents, or of the individuals for whom they buy.

Fifth. We believe the regions round about Zion to have been the counties joining Jackson county, which is in the State of Missouri, and Zion has not been moved out of her place; sec. 98, par. 4. Therefore, the "regions round about" must still be the same in extent, notwithstanding the *then* "adjoining counties" may *now* be divided.

Sixth. We believe the land should be bought. See D. & C., sec. 58, par. 11; sec. 57, par. 2; sec. 48, par. 2; sec. 102, par. 8; sec. 98, pars. 9, 10.

Seventh. We believe now is the time to begin the gathering, by purchasing *all the land all around Zion* and making settlements by the various churches.

Eighth. We believe now is the time referred to by the Lord in the parable of the twelve olive trees. Sec. 98, par. 6-10.

Ninth. We believe that not only the signs of the times declare it, but the sentiments everywhere manifest, by the Saints locating individually in the "regions round about," and from the great fact that it is now tolerable for the Saints to gather "consistent with the feelings of the people," as there is also a great desire on their part, in every region, to sell their land at low prices and on reasonable terms.

Tenth. We believe it would redound to the greatest and most permanent good to the whole body to begin the *gathering*, or, in *other words*, the *purchase* of all the lands in the "regions round about," by *agents* or companies of the different branches or districts, and proceed at once to settle on the same and create employment for the poor, and extend the purchase of lands surrounding each settlement as fast as circumstances and opportunities permit, until all the land that can be, is purchased.

Eleventh. We believe it would be conducive

to the successful purchase, permanent and peaceful occupancy of the land, to print and circulate a circular letter or tract, embodying the plans and principles of the commencement of the "beginning of the gathering," with suitable laws for the government of the Saints, not as a Church or religious body, but as colonies or settlements of Saints, until the laws of the State of Missouri may be so modified as not to prohibit the establishment of a church with extensive landed property within her borders, or until such times as we are commanded further of the Lord.

Twelfth. We believe that farming is the most certain, and most honorable of employments: "He who tilleth the soil *shall* have *plenty* of bread, but he who followeth after vain persons *shall* have poverty *enough*."

How many are compelled, who take up farms, to do so with mortgages covering the entire valuation of their property, with a heavy interest, from ten to sixteen per cent, eating up the great bulk of their incomes; added to this, they may be a great distance from market and are compelled to sell all their produce at a great sacrifice; while on the other hand they are compelled to pay an exorbitant price for all they use or consume, yet how few do we find, who are industrious farmers, ever failing.

in their business. When, however, all these evils can be avoided, and all the benefits of a commercial mart be enjoyed in the rural district what great results may not reasonably be expected by a "Co-operative Agricultural Association."

Thirteenth. We believe that "all people were born free and equal, with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Fourteenth. We believe that all monopolies are directly antagonistic to the above grand principle of our National Constitution, and tend more or less to *destroy* the peace, comfort and happiness, and to enslave the minds and bodies of all poor or dependent people.

Fifteenth. We believe it to be the noblest work of man to alleviate the condition of the poor, the needy and the helpless, and to exalt the humble and righteous.

Sixteenth. We believe the best method of doing this is to invigorate their minds with a proper conception of the true dignity of manhood, by placing within the reach of every individual the means whereby he can, without fear of disaster, successfully carve out his own fortune.

Seventeenth. We believe that an equality in earthly blessings is necessary, *by the mass*,

to the full enjoyment of heavenly or spiritual blessings.

Eighteenth. We believe that *equality* does not consist in an equal dividend of property or effects, for this in many cases would necessitate a continual dividing and breaking up of interests and estates, and still no such equality realized, and instead thereof a great injustice would be inflicted on the thrifty, wise and judicious, as well as an injury to the indolent, the careless and profligate, for all people are not alike constituted.

Nineteenth. We believe that equality does more properly consist in framing such a code of laws as will guarantee to the most indigent a comfortable support, and place him in such a condition as will enable him to compete with all his fellows in supplying all the necessaries, comforts, and ordinary luxuries of life, and as far as possible, consistent with public and individual prosperity, provide his family with a suitable home of his own, both comfortable and attractive. And it is still further and more completely embodied in such a consistent *social* relation as will open such a free, unconstrained intercourse with all classes, that all such barriers to our higher mutual development, as rank, family descent, official position, benefits or advantages of education, dress, per-

sonal appearance, or wealth may be neutralized; and instead of being a means of self-exaltation, should be esteemed only as so many opportunities or obligations by which we are in duty bound to exalt the less fortunate in life.

Twentieth. We believe there is no law, human or Divine, that justly prohibits an individual from improving on his talents or property.

Twenty-first. We believe it to be the duty of all people of *means*, but especially of Latter Day Saints, to so arrange for the poor that they may all become well informed, independent, self supporting citizens; but fearing from past and present indications that this will never be done, therefore, we believe that the poor and those of moderate means should combine their money and labor capital to consummate so noble a design.

Twenty second. We believe that no enterprise tending toward the gathering will be successful, or will receive Divine approbation where labor is not considered capital; where the poor are oppressed in their wages, or their rights as equals in the struggle of life for peace, comfort and preservation are ignored.

Twenty-third. We believe that every man who is able to work and willing to invest his capital, (which is his labor), in the common

stock should be looked upon as a standing cash capital, to be reckoned by the amount of interest, (benefit or labor) he produces, and one whom the commonwealth cannot afford to do without.

Such an enterprise, with suitable Constitution and By Laws, with regulations governing trades, work-shops, mills, factories, stores, agriculture, schools; the civil, religious and social circles, together with all business and business transactions, we propose to inaugurate; the leading features of which have been feebly expressed; to accomplish which, we welcome to our assistance all persons of moderate capital who are willing to work in design with us, to prepare for the gathering of the Saints, according to the will of God, in purchasing land in the regions round about.

It is not our purpose to exclude the wealthy from participating and working with us in what we deem to be the most reasonable, plausible, and most likely means to succeed in the "beginning of the gathering;" but we do feel that *man*, not *money*, should be the standard of society; and *God*, not *gold* the object of worship.

Feeling an inward monitor and motor impelling us in the design, we trust to the favors of Heaven for good men to aid with necessary

wisdom, means and advice, in the work that must eventually engage the attention of all True Latter Day Saints.

With the most sanguine hopes for the success of the enterprise, we earnestly request that all who desire to benefit by it will inform us directly, by mail, the amount they can invest by the first of March, 1878, (without injury to themselves), and what portion of said amount can be raised prior to the Fall Conference, and whether or not they expect to settle immediately with the Company.

It is designed to have the company fully prepared for settling by April First, 1878. In order to do this, committees must be appointed for "location," and various other business transactions; we, therefore, want the correct names and post office addresses of all who are in sympathy with the movement, together with all information that may be useful to the company or its organization.

Praying for the welfare of all God's people, and the speedy redemption of Zion, I am very truly your brother in the kingdom and patience of Jesus,

I. N. W. COOPER.

PLANO, Illinois, Feb. 22nd, 1877.

P. S. We are authorized by the Company, which is now sufficiently organized to guaran-

tee a settlement according to the above design, to state that all persons who are in sympathy with the movement and can endorse the principles set forth in the foregoing article and desire to cast their lots with us, to make it known to the company by addressing the undersigned, to whom questions upon matters of business may be referred until otherwise notified, or until a further organization of the company. Stamps should invariably accompany any business communication when an answer is expected.

We earnestly request any persons knowing of suitable locations for colonization, to communicate the same, at as early a date as possible, stating the amount of land that can be bought in or nearly in a body, the price per acre, nature of the soil and seasons, to what best adapted, rate of taxes, railroad or river communications, together with all other advantages that would tend to make it a desirable location.

I. N. W. COOPER,
 PLANO, ILL., May 12th, 1877. *Box 50, Plano, Ill.*