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The Ethic of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

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“The Life” under the New Dispensation. As the New Dispensation is but a renewal of the Way after the world’s departure from it, and is the “everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:6) restored in a final dispensation, it can not be otherwise than that its ethic—what we call its “Life”—must be the same as “the Life” or ethic of the other dispensations of the same gospel. The only change to be looked for would be in the direction of clarification, and perhaps of emphasis; and in this there is no disappointment. For instance: increased emphasis in the New Dispensation is placed upon the law of chastity by saying that those who persist in unchaste looking upon women to lust after them not only commit adultery in their heart, as the Savior taught, but they “shall deny the faith”; and “shall not have the Spirit” (i.e., of God), and if they repent not “shall be cast out”—disfellowshipped from the Church (D&C 42:23).

The same fate is to befall those who kill, steal, or lie; and the murderer is to die (of course, under the law of the land, and when condemned under due process of law). And also it is written of the murderer that “he . . . shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come” (D&C 42:18-21).

Evil speaking is condemned: “Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm,” and “he that sinneth and repenteth not shall be cast out.” “All things” are to be done in “cleanliness” before the Lord. “Idleness” is condemned: “Thou shalt not be idle,” says the word of God in the New Dispensation; “for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer” (D&C 42:27-28, 41-42). And “the idler ⟨is to⟩ [shall] be had in remembrance before the Lord” (D&C 68:30). That is idleness is just cause of complaint against the idlers before the Church and its tribunals: for, as it is written, “the idler shall not have place in the church, ⟨unless⟩ [except] he repent and mend his ways” (D&C 75:29). Also if “any man”—or person—rob, lie,

or steal or commit murder he is to be delivered up unto the law of the land for punishment, when proven guilty according to the laws of the land.¹ The Church may not shield those who become criminals under the law of the land.

Treatment of the sick. Special sympathy is enjoined in behalf of the sick. The ordinance of administration for the sick, as given in the Epistle of St. James, is revived in the New Dispensation: the elders of the Church are to be sent for, who shall anoint the sick with oil, and pray over them, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise them up; and if they have sinned they shall be forgiven (see James 5:14-15). As given in the modern revelation, it also says that if the sick “have not faith to be healed, but believe,” they “shall be nourished with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food(s). . . . And if they die they shall die unto me,” saith the Lord, “and if they live they shall live unto me.” “And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them.” Referring again to the sick, who are to be administered to as above set forth: “he that hath faith in (the Christ) [me] to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed.” The blind, “who hath faith to see shall see”; and so following with the deaf and the lame. “And they who have not faith to do these things, but believe in me,” saith the Lord, shall “have power to become my sons; and inasmuch as they break not my (commandments) [laws] thou (the Church) shalt bear their infirmities” (D&C 42:43-52). How excellent and merciful, O Lord, are all thy ways!

The law for physical salvation—the Word of Wisdom. Better yet than provisions made for healing the sick is the revelation of the Lord on the preservation of health, God’s law of health and physical well-being, known as the Word of Wisdom, showing forth “the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days—Given for a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints” (D&C 89:2-3). This revelation to be sent [by] “greeting,” “not (however) by commandment or constraint, but by revelation and the word of wisdom” (D&C 89:2). It was given also in consequence of “evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days.” “I have warned you, and forewarn you,” said the Lord, “by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation” (D&C 89:4).

¹The great body of all that is here set down as the moral law of the New Dispensation is found in D&C 42, given to the Church as revelation February 1831.

“The Word” as warning. The date of this revelation was February 1833. It was about three quarters of a century before a national pure food law was enacted in the United States;² and during the interim of three quarters of a century, adulteration of, and misbranding of poisonous and deleterious foods, drugs, medicines, wines, malt products, and liquors, and the transportation and sale of these adulterated and mislabeled products to the people ran riot in America to the disgrace of our country and to its civilization. The long list of adulterations at which the national law is leveled is a terrible indictment against the manufacturers of the country and its commercial integrity.

That period of three quarters of a century of food, medicine, drug, and liquor adulteration, clearly vindicated the prophetic spirit of the Word of Wisdom for it was given “In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of ⟨designing⟩ [conspiring] men in the last days, I have warned you” (saith the Lord), “and forewarn you, by giving [unto] you this word of wisdom by revelation” (D&C 89:4).

How valuable the warning was can be appreciated when the Word of Wisdom itself is considered.

The negative phase of the Word of Wisdom.

Inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him. And, behold, this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make. And, again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies. And again, tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill. And again, hot drinks ⟨having in mind, those say who have interpreted the law from the beginning, tea and coffee as the hot drinks⟩ are not for the body or belly. (D&C 89:5-9)

This is the prohibitive part of the law; and when considered with reference to that riot of adulteration through which our country passed ~~from~~ ***shortly before*** the date of the revelation to the passage of the

²The first national pure food law went into effect on the first of January, 1907, see 34 U.S. Statutes 768 (June 30, 1906). It was declared to be an act for “preventing the manufacture, sale or transportation of adulterated or misbranded or poisonous or deleterious foods, drugs, medicines, and liquors, and for regulating traffic therein.” Then throughout its many sections it enumerates the various articles and ***classes*** of them that have been subject to adulteration, also of misbranding and sale under these false brands endangering the health and life of the people. A fine synopsis of the National Pure Food and Drugs Act will be found in the *World Almanac* for 1908, 187-88. Also U.S. Statutes for same year (1908).

first pure food law—three quarters of a century—the value of God’s “warning” appears; for it was upon the articles whose use is forbidden to the saints, that the heaviest adulteration fell. But apart from adulteration these forbidden things in themselves are quite generally recognized as evil in their effects upon the constitution and health of man.

The positive phase of “The Word.” On the positive side of the Word of Wisdom, that which recommends things for the use of man, rather than dealing with prohibition of things, the “wisdom” of God is also manifest:

And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving. Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly; And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine. All grain is ordained for the use of man and of beasts, to be the staff of life, not only for man but for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and all wild animals that run or creep on the earth; And these hath God made for the use of man only in times of famine and excess of hunger. All grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine; that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground—Nevertheless, wheat for man, and corn for the ox, and oats for the horse, and rye for the fowls and for swine, and for all beasts of the field, and barley for all useful animals, and for mild drinks, as also other grain. (D&C 89:10-17)

A whole chapter in commentary would be insufficient to point out the dietetical value, and health-promoting wisdom of these suggestions. Such commentary we may not indulge here, nor is it imperatively necessary since the reasonableness of it all, and the simple phraseology in which it is couched *in the revelation*, leaves nothing to be desired in the way of clearness, and makes its high value as a hygienic law obvious. From it may easily be arranged the dietetical program for the invalid, the athlete, or the student. All modern science of dietetics and hygiene will approve and applaud its soundness.

Psychological phase of “the Word.” And now to its psychological value—its spiritual reaction—how great it is!

And all saints who remember to keep [and do] these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, (that is, honoring all the law of God by obeying it, and not confining one’s self to just obedience to these Word of Wisdom precepts, but in addition thereto walking in

obedience to the commandments, they) shall receive health in their naval and marrow to their bones; And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. (D&C 89:18–21)

What an encouragement for striving for attaining perfection in observing the whole law of God!

Provision made for the poor. As a sympathetic attitude toward the sick and the afflicted is enjoined in the New Dispensation, so too is there sympathy and a policy of helpfulness enjoined towards the poor. For in this New Dispensation as in former ones, it is the poor that have had the gospel preached unto them; it has been the common people who, so far, have heard the message of the Lord gladly; and as the meek, who are also usually the poor, since the meek are to “inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5) the Lord’s plans in the New Dispensation contemplate provisions for the achievement of their welfare. Hence the words of the Lord to the Church: “Thou (shalt) [wilt] remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support. . . . And inasmuch as ye (do) impart of your substance unto the poor, ye [will] do it unto me” (D&C 42:30–31). For this and other Church uses for revenue the law of tithing is instituted, the payment of the Lord’s tenth, or tithing, one-tenth of one’s interest annually; for general Church expense purposes, which includes “care of the poor.”

This is the present arrangement for meeting the Church’s need of revenue. The revelations of God in the New Dispensation, however, contemplate a broader provision for the betterment of the material welfare of the membership of the Church than this, and especially for the humble and poor, and those who lack initiative in the creation of wealth by developing the world’s resources, or directing the application of capital to industries, commerce and trade. In outline the plan contemplates men regarding the earth and all that is in it as belonging to the Over-Lord who created it—land and sea, and air, and all that comprises it; all wealth of life, and all its wealth of resources in soil fruitfulness, in forests, in grass covered plains, in mountains underlaid with coal beds—the stored-up sunshine of past geological ages; the mountains seamed with silver lodes, and honey-combed with gold-bearing quartz; plains, again, underlaid with oil lakes; deeper reaches of the ancient gravel beds where lie the precious gems for adornment; the power of the waterfall—all the force and power of gravitation; all animal power, all chemical forces—everything that is wealth or can be transmuted

into wealth—all these things are God's. His by right of proprietorship unquestioned and unquestionable; for he created them, man did not. In the larger provision of the law, then, yet to be accepted by those who recognize God, not only as creator of all that is in the world, and of the world, but as sustaining and perpetuating Power of the world, proprietor and rightful Over-Lord of it. These will desire to give outward manifestation of this inward faith by confessing themselves stewards merely of that portion of God's wealth that comes into their hands, and will hold themselves responsible to him for the administration of that stewardship committed to them by the providences of God. Hence the contemplated fuller development of the law of God, governing material economic relations, among those who accept the New Dispensation, will yet lead them to accept the principle and live the law of consecration and stewardship. This means:

The law of consecration and stewardship. 1. An acknowledgment of the proprietorship of God in the world and to all that is in it; an acknowledgment of him as its creator and the sustaining power of it; and its Over-Lord. This acknowledgment on the part of man being made by a solemn consecration of all he possesses of wealth or wealth creating powers; this consecration will include all lands and their equipment; all mines and their output; all industries, trades, professions; all special gifts to develop natural resources, or to direct labor to develop resources—all which are wealth-creating powers—of all this men in their respective places, and possessions, and callings, and natural gifts for the creation of wealth and its distribution, not for selfish, personal ends, but for the common good and welfare of all. Men, I say, will consecrate all this and themselves with it as stewards unto the Over-Lord of the created world.

2. The second part of this law of consecration and stewardship contemplates that after such a whole and complete consecration on the part of the believer and disciple of the New Dispensation, the disciple shall receive as permanent steward, his allotment in the economic scheme of things. That which shall be his to have and to hold and develop according to his own initiative and judgment, and in perfect freedom, but under consciousness of responsibility to God for the faithful management of the stewardship received as from God.

3. And then, as perpetuating the remembrance of both the consecration and the stewardship, the steward will deliver into a common fund or "storehouse," not as now, "the Lord's tenth" or tithing, but all his surplus—perhaps annually—arising from the management of his stewardship and in turn having claims upon the common storehouse

(known in the New Dispensation parlance as the “Lord’s storehouse”) for capital, with which to enlarge his stewardship, better stock the farm, enlarge or re-equip the factory, improve the shipping facilities, drain the mines or explore for new ore bodies, improve efficiency in professions by making possible extension work at institutions of technology; and to inventors and explorers in pursuit of new knowledge, grant opportunity for research work. All this, but of course much more, is contemplated in the New Dispensation economics for its membership. What is here set down is in barest outline and at present in the Church no formative steps are taken to realize the ideals of the law of consecration and stewardship contemplated by the revelations given in the first decades of the existence of the Church.³

An effort was made by the Church to put into practice the law of consecration and stewardship in both Jackson County, Missouri, and in Kirtland, Ohio, in the first decade of the existence of the Church; but such were the disturbed conditions in which the Church existed in those years, so frequent and violent the persecutions which followed the Saints, that it was impossible in these disturbed conditions to carry out the new economic scheme and God-given principles for the

³These revelations begin with a commandment respecting the consecration of property for the poor “with a covenant and deed (that) [which] cannot be broken,” also that every man shall be made accountable unto the Lord a steward over his own property, etc. (see D&C 42:30–39). Revelation given in February 1831, Ohio. Also D&C 51 (all of it relates to this subject), given in May 1831. D&C 58, given in August 1831, gives direction for the allotment of several stewardships of lands in Jackson Country, Missouri, to certain elders who had gathered there to that land. Instructions on stewardship in D&C 70; 82; 104; and other revelations passim. A brief treatise on this whole subject will be found in the author’s *New Witnesses for God*, chapter 28 on “The Evidence of Inspiration” (of the Prophet Joseph Smith), 1:392–405, derived from the wisdom in the plan proposed for the betterment of the temporal condition of mankind.

Also a later treatise prepared for the section of Columbia University’s (N.Y.) economic library, which received the following acknowledgment by Harry J. Carman, dated December 22, 1924:

This is a long delayed note to express to you my thanks for your article entitled “Economic Aspects of the Career of the Mormons,” which you so kindly prepared for our library more than a year ago. I have just completed a chapter of a projected work entitled “Pioneers and the Transmississippi” in which, among other things, I especially stressed the economic system of the Mormons and their influence as colonizers of the West. Your manuscript, which was very helpful to me, I have had catalogued and placed on the shelves of our college study.

[A copy of this study was found at Cornell by Gordon Thomasson.]

betterment of the conditions of the people in their temporal affairs; and in July, 1838, the present law of tithing was given under which the Church [members], then assembled in Missouri, were required to place all their surplus property in the hands of the bishop of the Church in Zion (Missouri), for the building of a “house of the Lord”—then under contemplation—and the settling of the indebtedness of the Church; and after that they were required to pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this has been the law under which the Church has lived since that time, and which is now the law of the Church under which her membership live.⁴

Concluding reflections: The one law of righteousness. The foregoing items brought forth in chapter 54 ~~and 55~~ are some of the respects in which the Life in the New Dispensation of the gospel is deepened, a little enlarged, and emphasized over and above what is to be found in other dispensations. But the thing which most of all affects the life in the New Dispensation and makes it to abound most with influence for the founding of God’s one and only universal law of eternal righteousness, the same through all ages, and in all places and making the duty of man under the gospel comprehensive, consists in bringing over into modern knowledge the passage from the pronouncement of God in the great council held before the world was: “We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abr. 3:25). This makes the commandments of God the law of man’s moral life, the law of his

⁴See D&C 119. Undoubtedly the requirement as to all “surplus property” being “put into the hands of the bishop of Zion” for the building of the house of the Lord (the temple at Far West), etc., “as the beginning of the tithing of my people,” was a commandment especially directed to the Saints then assembled and assembling in Missouri, to alleviate the immediate distresses then existing both as to the Church as an organization, and many of the Saints sorely in need. It was a temporary commandment, and not designed as a perpetual requirement for all time to come upon the Saints as the payment of one-tenth of their income annually was. I judge this to be the case because at no time since the Missouri days have the Saints, or converts on entering the Church, been required to put all their surplus property into the hands of the bishop of the Church. It has been considered all sufficient, apparently, if members from their entrance into the Church have paid their tithing, which is one-tenth of their interest annually.

In the later years of President Brigham Young’s life an effort was made in various settlements in Utah and Idaho to institute what was called “The United Order,” involving some of the principles of consecration and stewardship—but not all of them. After a few uncertain years of precarious life, the experiments were abandoned. (See **B. H. Roberts**, “**The Economic Aspects of the Career of the Mormons**,” **Columbia [N.Y.] University Library [J115], Economic Sec.**)

progress, the measure of his duty, and the manifestation of his love for God: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (1 Jn. 5:3; cf. John 14:15); “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is [the] transgression of the law,” and “all unrighteousness is sin” (1 Jn. 3:4; 5:17). The law of God then, made up, of course, of the commandments of God, is the universal gospel ethic, common to all its dispensations. And hence, when the final dispensation—the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times was ushered in—there came with it the whole law of eternal righteousness, based upon the commandments of God.

Hence all the law of righteousness of the patriarchal dispensations, of the Mosaic dispensation, and the law under the prophets of Israel—all this enters into the New and Final Dispensation of the gospel. The Ten Commandments, and especially as generalized by the Christ into the two all-inclusive commandments, love of God and love of man; all the precepts of the Christ in the Sermon on the Mount—these are reinstated as the Law of God. The Sermon on the Mount taught in the precepts of the Master and exemplified in his life, is the law of God in the New Dispensation. That dispensation is characterized by a fullness of the law of righteousness, as it is by a fullness of ordinances, of authority from God, or priesthood; of a fullness of events that will restore all things to the order that God has decreed for them, completing both the salvation of men, and the redemption of the earth itself, to the status of a celestial world, the habitat of immortal and glorified Intelligences.

Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: Taylor, *Government of God*.