



Type: Magazine Article

The Precepts of Men

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Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 72, No. 6 (June 1969)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 39-42

Abstract: This article shows that Nephi once taught of the unfortunate condition of mankind when they cease to trust in God and to rely on “the precepts of men and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 28:26). One of the evil doctrines of our education system is sex education in our schools. The “new morality” fails to make the distinction between right and wrong. Personal agency is in jeopardy.

nants and to take upon himself other obligations that will make of him an heir, and he will become a member of the "Church of the Firstborn." "They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things." He will receive of the Father's fullness and of his glory. Is this worth having? It cannot be obtained without some effort.

We frequently hear quoted these words of the Lord to Joseph Smith: "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (D&C 131:6.) In ignorance of what? The philosophies of the world? No! In ignorance of the gospel truths—the saving principles and ordinances by which salvation comes! These must not only be understood, but they must be lived. Knowledge of them will not in itself save us. Obedience thereto will. And then will come the fullness of knowledge, bringing with it wisdom, power, and dominion. And the fullness of these blessings can only be obtained in the temple of the Lord. We are told that the fear (love)

of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

"Also, I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth.

"And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom." (D&C 88:76-77.)

Do not let us forget the words of Alma: "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.

"And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.

"Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world." (Al. 34:32-34.)

The Lord is always merciful and kind. If we draw near unto him, he will draw near unto us. ". . . seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (D&C 88:63.)

Our chief trouble is that we do not seek diligently. Our seeking is superficial; we seem to think the Lord is bound to hear us without our putting forth much effort. Let diligence and love be our guides, and we shall find the path of eternal life.

May we all heed these warnings, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Address delivered Saturday morning, April 5, 1969

The Precepts of Men



President Alvin R. Dyer

Counselor in the First Presidency

Once again, my brothers and sisters, we are feeling the surge and influence of this great conference of the Church. I am grateful with you that President McKay is listening and watching this broadcast.

The prophet Nephi once spoke of the woeful condition of mankind when deceived by the precepts of men. Said he:

" . . . wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost!" (2 Ne. 28:26.)

The Lord has warned his people of the penetration of evil in the last days,

"seeking to destroy the souls of men." (D&C 10:27.)

We can see the need of these warnings in the evil trends that are deteriorating man's sense of decency and moral standards.

The divine declaration, which gives unto man the right of moral agency as once declared—"Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3:22)—has come under question, and man is seeking by the concepts of men to destroy moral agency by creating what they have chosen to call the "new morality." If we accept the evil doctrines of slanted

educational programs, we will witness a breakdown of morals that could bring about a depraved new social order.

The "new morality" denies distinctions between right or wrong, good or evil, substituting a code that decides the right or wrong of behavior according to human need, regardless of what that need is distorted to be.

If we accept the teachings of this concept, it could lead to a society burdened with mass control based upon principles of unrighteous dominion over the individual. It is well known that a communistic philosophy would like to see this succeed in America and

throughout the world.

These deceptive and shadowed objectives of well-propagandized programs are moving at a very rapid clip. The first to which I refer is sex education or family life education, which is placing emphasis on raw sex in the school classroom, creating widespread contention, causing deep concern among parents and leaders.

The programmers of this type of sex education, aware of resistance, are fortified with worked-out methods to deal with parental and community opposition. This matter needs the serious concern of an aroused public to deny the use of such materials and more firmly establish sound moral teachings in the fields of physiology and hygiene, as now provided by public school law.

The National Education Association and American Medical Association's endorsement of a maturation educational program seems to have stepped up the activity of such organizations as the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (known as SIECUS) and the School Health Education Studies (known as SHES), with others, particularly those that are integrated in family life education courses.

With ominous precision, reputable publishing houses are competing in this untapped market with expertly prepared materials, films, and teaching aids of all sorts. Herein, because of its sensational marketable value, is a formidable danger.

False images in the life of the very young will result from their idea to teach facts of reproduction before youth are emotionally involved. The misguided fostering of sex education in the classroom on the basis that it will lessen sex ignorance and reduce illegitimate pregnancy, venereal disease, and related problems has no basis for sound conclusions. Actual experience has proven the results to be just the opposite.

Based on the slanted experience of foreign countries, whence the idea has come, infiltrations into the classroom have already been made in certain areas. Others have it under study and have launched pilot programs. Legislators throughout the country are being besieged for legislation to make it legal; some, most fortunately, to prevent it.

An article in *Look* magazine tells of sex education in a foreign country, inferring that America is far behind in the new order. This article contains perverted concepts of morals from those who would fill the school classroom with a complete exposé of sex. To accomplish this, the article suggests the need of a welfare state, to take over

certain responsibilities of parents. I quote:

"The welfare state has taken over many economic responsibilities of the parents. We are all becoming that kind of society. . . . You can spot trends that may have a chance to become dominant in other countries. In sex education, there are some local programs that are very good, but most of the United States has nothing.

"The Contraceptive Society is now here and can be pushed back as little as the industrialized society and the automobile."¹

The "new morality" requires that young people solve their own sex problems without the help of teachers or parents. What is moral and what is not moral, or whether morality is involved at all, is to be decided by the student. The most surprising and devastating of all is the effort that is being made to isolate sex education as being completely devoid of moral responsibility, fear, inhibitions, and emotional restraints.

Whether used by those who are skilled or unskilled, any teachings that describe and illustrate human reproductive organs and their functions, and any teachings that are directly counter to standards of sexual morality, do not harmonize with the gospel, and the Church is therefore opposed to such. They are void of respect and reverence for the opposite sex, life, birth, and parenthood.

We can measure what will happen in America by the experience and results in other countries that have been saturated with sex education in the school classroom. These statistics apply to one of the countries:

85% of the people believe in sex relations without marriage.

98% have had premarital relations.²

50% of the brides who kneel at the altar are pregnant at the time.³

The majority of women want free and unrestricted abortions.⁴

Concerning venereal disease, caused no doubt by the impact of sex education in this particular country, one report reveals the fact that "gonorrhea and syphilis are more widespread than in any other civilized country in the world."⁵ Another report simply describes it as "catastrophic."⁶ Yet the programmers of sex education are trying to tell us that it will curb venereal disease.

Illegitimate births, which, according to SIECUS propaganda, will be reduced by sex education, actually increased by nearly 50% in the country referred to.⁷

To claim any real benefits from such a system would not only need a so-called "brain washing" from the

earliest ages up, but would also require individuals to make choices without recognizing moral consequences.

Moving forward under the umbrella of the "new morality" is sensitivity training, which, as a tool to shape human behavior, can be, and is, used to ends that are inconsistent with gospel principles. Certain methods of sensitivity training develop a form of induced hysteria, meant to break down morals, manners, and the traditions of civility. Such approaches can do infinite harm, especially to young people.

As we view sensitivity training and other group psychology designed for interclass communication affecting the character and personal life of the individual (such as is done in T-group training, group dynamics, auto-criticism, basic encounter group, self-honesty session, and human potential workshop), emphasizing mass or consensus decision, well might we ask the question, What has happened to the unfortunate individual?

The greatest gift from God unto his children is that of personal agency. It is the foundation of spiritual culture, the principle upon which our Constitution was founded, and is the underlying obligation of our school system to maintain, yet we see it being jeopardized in the teaching methods of sensitivity training.

There are three main points of the group criticism techniques that show how the rights of the individual may be submerged:

1. An atmosphere is created by the participants to open up their behavior to the examination of others. This plays down self-reliance.

2. Steps are taken to unfreeze or destroy old values, which have been adhered to individually, and substitute mass decisions, which yield to the strongest personality of the group.

3. Gradually members may unlearn moral reactions and then experiment with new responses, adopting what they call the "new morality," which has no morals in it.

We hear the phrase, "If therapy is good for people in trouble, then it is bound to be as good or better for people who function well." As to this, I would say, woe be unto the medical doctor who would prescribe drugs and surgery for the hale and hearty.

Group criticism sessions are suggestive of methods developed by Mao's Red Guards, where participants are exhorted to public confession and are encouraged to denounce one another, all for the purpose of breaking the will. One thinks also of Nazi methods of "strength through joy" fun and games. Sensitivity training is a device used throughout Communist countries.

Sex education and sensitivity training teaching methods, when abusively used, not only break down barriers of privacy, but also provide the techniques for mass, rather than personal, decision. This tends to destroy the agency of man and is therefore evil in concept.

Church behavioral methods such as testimony meetings, priesthood and missionary report meetings, oral evaluations, and self-evaluations and confession emphasize the importance of, and preserve the rights of, the individual.

It will be of interest to know that sensitivity training has been ruled out as a teaching method in our Church institutes and seminaries.

A third deadly movement that is surging forward anew, to become united with other evil forces, is that of greater flexibility in marriage laws, which attempt to liberalize that which is already immorally liberal. A Ministry of Education's medical officer describes unchastity as not in his view unchaste, as associated with out-of-wedlock immoral activity.

A noted judge who has heard some 25,000 divorce cases tells of the immaturity of many early marriages. "If people," said he, "spent as much time contemplating marriage as they do buying a car or a house, they would be better off." In concluding his remarks, however, he suggests a period of "trial marriage," which nullifies his proper advice. Concerning this he said: "And there's much to be said for trial marriage, especially since the pill is in such widespread use."⁸

Can you contemplate with me the effects of a trial marriage system upon morals? The very idea of it fits the "new morality" concept and becomes a part of evil principles we must be alert to.

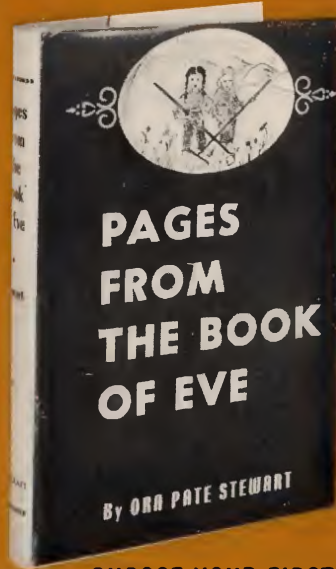
The "youth for alcohol" movement is gaining momentum. The magazine *Today's Health*, published by the American Medical Association, reports a discussion on the subject, "Should Children Be Taught to Drink?" All members of the panel, in one way or another, favored the introduction of alcohol in the life of youth, even at the age of four years, as a prevention of *alcoholism*.

One panelist made this comment: "The parent has the responsibility to provide a healthy total atmosphere for the child. This involves a lot of areas, including alcohol."⁹

It must be obvious, even to these noted specialists, that such a program would only intensify the misery that it would erroneously try to correct.

We must not be insensible to evil influences that are being thrust upon

YOURS FREE!



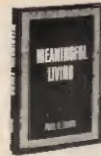
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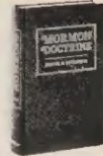
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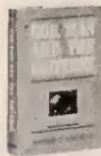
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us by the perverted principles of sex education, sensitivity training, youth for alcohol, and any flexibilities in the sacredness of marriage, which are challenging moral decency and righteousness. We must unite our efforts, by organized parental councils with fathers taking part, through school boards, textbook committees, and proper legislation, to vigorously oppose such programming.

May we be reminded of the prime role that parents have in teaching children principles of truth and right.

From divine inspiration have come these words to safeguard us individually: “. . . let virtue garnish thy

thoughts unceasingly; *then* shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God.” (D&C 121:45. Italics added.)

The Lord has told us to live by the pattern of gospel laws. Said he: “And again, I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations.” (D&C 52:14.)

Let us be mindful of these prophetic words, speaking of the evil one: “. . . he shall speak great words against the most high, and shall wear out the saints . . . and think to change times and laws.” (Dan. 7:25.)

I bear testimony to the fact that if

we will keep our place secure in the kingdom of God, if we are to safeguard our children against the evils of the day, we must walk in paths of righteousness and keep close to that way of life found in the pattern of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹J. Robert Moskin, “The Contraceptive Society,” *Look*, February 4, 1969, p. 53.
- ²*Ibid.*, p. 50.
- ³*U.S. News and World Report*, March 17, 1969, pp. 48ff.
- ⁴*Look*, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
- ⁵*American Opinion*, March 1969.
- ⁶*U.S. News and World Report*, *op. cit.*
- ⁷*Ibid.*, p. 51.
- ⁸Judge Tom Williams, quoted in “Intelligence Report,” *Parade*, February 16, 1969, p. 8.
- ⁹*Today's Health*, February 1969, pp. 46ff.

Friday morning session, April 4, 1969

To the Humble Followers of Christ



Elder Ezra Taft Benson
Of the Council of the Twelve

Thank God for that timely and inspiring message from our beloved leader, President David O. McKay.

My remarks today are directed to the humble followers of Christ. I pray that what I have to say will be of help to them.

One of the grand promises which the Lord made when he restored his Church in these latter days was that the Church should never again be taken from the earth nor given to another people. This is reassuring, for no matter how much individual apostasy we may see occur among Church members, the Church itself shall endure and remain intact. Our task, then, is to see that we personally endure to the end in faithful fellowship with the Church.

The Lord distinguishes between the Church and its members. He said he was well pleased with the restored Church, speaking collectively, but not individually. (D&C 1:30.) During his ministry on earth, the Lord spoke of

the gospel net drawing in fish. The good fish, he said, were gathered into vessels, while the bad were cast away.

It is important to realize that while the Church is made up of mortals, no mortal is the Church. Judas, for a period of time, was a member of the Church—in fact, one of its apostles—but the Church was not Judas.

Sometimes we hear someone refer to a division in the Church. In reality, the Church is not divided. It simply means that there are some who, for the time being at least, are members of the Church but not in harmony with it. These people have a temporary membership and influence in the Church; but unless they repent, they will be missing when the final membership records are recorded.

It is well that our people understand this principle, so they will not be misled by those apostates within the Church who have not yet repented or been cut off. But there is a cleansing coming. The Lord says that his ven-

geance shall be poured out “upon the inhabitants of the earth. . . . And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord; First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me. . . .” (D&C 112:24-26.) I look forward to that cleansing; its need within the Church is becoming increasingly apparent.

The Lord strengthened the faith of the early apostles by pointing out Judas as a traitor, even before this apostle had completed his iniquitous work. So also in our day the Lord has told us of the tares within the wheat that will eventually be hewn down when they are fully ripe. But until they are hewn down, they will be with us, amongst us. The hymn entitled “Though in the Outward Church Below” contains this thought:

“Though in the outward Church below