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The Marriage Institution of the New Dispensation

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

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The unit of society—the family. Hitherto we have considered “the Life” mainly with reference to the individual only. “The Life” would be incomplete, however, if it were not considered with reference to the unit of society—the family; man and woman united, and offspring as the result of their union. In a word, marriage, and what comes of it; the relations it creates, the duties it imposes, the things it designs to achieve, the society it brings into existence, the civilization it creates.

It is evidenced as much in the nature of man as it is clearly written in the revelations of God, that “it is not good ⟨for⟩ [that the] man ⟨to⟩ [should] be alone” (Gen. 2:18); the nature of both man and woman cries out aloud—each needs the other for completion. Completed man is man-woman. Each is but half of a necessary whole; both—and together—are needed for perpetuation of human life—of race. Hence in this story of the creation, when it is proposed that man be made, God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”; and then:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. (Gen. 1:26-28)

In the second story of the creation, where the mystery of procreation is veiled under the story of the “rib,” woman is derived from man (and also, though it is not written, man is derived from woman), the mutual need of man and woman and their union is further emphasized. In all the animal creation brought to the lone Adam to be named by him, according to this story, there was not found a helpmeet for Adam. God had observed before that it was not good for man to be alone, and hence he declared the creation of a helpmeet for him; and so brought one forth, not from the animal creation to which Adam had given names, but one derived from the same nature and race as Adam himself,

from man, and brought her to Adam, who recognized in her “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she is taken out of Man” (that is, derived from the same race, and is of the same nature); and “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:23–24).

Thus was “man” completed; the family—the **community** unit, the unit of civilization—was made possible; two great, necessary things provided for; true companionship for man and woman; and the lawful perpetuation of the race.

What is achieved through marriage? Much has been written upon this institution of marriage as above set forth in Genesis, much in high praise of it, and worthily. An old English writer says of it:

Marriage is the mother of the world and preserves kingdoms and fills cities and churches and heaven itself. Like the ⟨fruitful⟩ [useful] bee, it builds a house, gathers sweetness from every flower, and labors and unites into societies and republics and sends out colonies and feeds the world with delicacies and obeys and keeps order and exercises many virtues and promotes the interest of mankind, and is that state of good to which God hath designed the present Constitution of the world.¹

And I might say, for those who accept the New Dispensation of the gospel, as set forth in this work, the constitution of all worlds. Marriage does all that is described above, and more. It constitutes the true community unit—the family—which is the source of national life and civilization; both depend upon the maintenance and perfection of this institution.

Its purposes: Companionship, offspring, family, society, and civilization. It will be observed that two major things are provided for in the Bible account of the marriage institution. These are (a) companionship: “it is not good for man to be alone” (nor for woman either); and (b), man and woman in the marriage relation must perpetuate the race. God’s commandment: “Multiply and replenish the earth”; and together subdue it.

The marriage relation is associated with the tenderest sentiments, the strongest passions (I use the word in its best sense), and the deepest interest of human life. It has to do with human love, and sex, and offspring—the perpetuation of life—the family, the home, and the

¹Jeremy Taylor [newspaper clipping in Draft 1].

race. It is the chief cornerstone in the temple of human existence. From the family comes the home, and it has become something of a fixed conviction with thoughtful statesmen, and others who give serious attention to the welfare of society and of nations, that no state can rise higher than its homes; and no church can be more righteous or influential than the firesides from which its members come. It follows that the stability of the home and its perpetuation become, nay, are, major factors in the concerns of society, of church, of state, and of humanity itself. The importance of marriage demands that every solemnity and stability that can be fused into it shall be claimed and secured for it. The great strength of marriage consists in the fact that it is an institution founded of God; that it is a religious institution—sacrament would be the better term—a relationship established by the law of God, and its purposes and obligations are determined by that law.

It is to be observed, in passing, that when instituted in Eden, marriage was a relationship that was established before death appeared in the Adamic race; and had not death been thrust into the scene, the relation of marriage between the first pair would have been perpetual—eternal. The question suggests itself—why, in view of the assured resurrection from the dead—the renewal of individual life in immortality, why should the passing incident of a temporary death break the eternity of the marriage covenant? More on this later.

The modern world's departure from the marriage institution. All the foregoing in relation to marriage, however, its solemnity, its sacredness, its perpetuity, the probability of the eternity of the relationship it establishes, all this is widely being departed from in modern life, until the whole fabric of the institution as it has hitherto been known, is menaced by the so-called march of recent progress—the trend in modern thought and action to divide the marriage purpose, companionship and offspring, and make it chiefly and in many cases entirely “companionate” with satisfaction of sex desire **without** offspring as a result of sex relation, eliminated; thus cancelling one of the two major features of the marriage institution. Perhaps in nothing in our modern life has there been such a wide departure from established moral standards both of the recent past and more ancient times than in the Christian, modern view of marriage.

Recent discussions on marriage. The subject has been discussed of late (1928-29) in some rather pretentious books; also in both the monthly and weekly magazines. It has been discussed from the lecture platform, also from the pulpit, in the daily press, and has

been made the theme—pro et con—of movie picture films. It has been the subject of discussion in very important church conferences, conventions and congresses.²

(a) *Book treatment.* The books that have treated this subject are quite numerous. I shall refer only to two of these, and this because they are quite typical of the spirit, in large part, of the others.

The first is under the title *Our Changing Morality*. It is edited by Freda Kirchwey, and is in the nature of a symposium. This book has fifteen writers of considerable prominence both in our own country and also in England; each contributes a chapter. Some of the subtitles in this book are: “Styles in Ethics”; “Modern Marriage”; “Changes in Sex Relations”; “Women—Free for What?” “Can Men and Women Be Friends?” Under such subtitles, sex relations, love, and marriage are discussed with extreme frankness. The trend of thought throughout the symposium may be judged from a few typical quotations.

First, it is held, “That all sexual intercourse should spring from the free impulse of both parties, based upon mutual inclination and nothing else.” “The cramping of love by institutions (the family and churches for instance) is one of the major evils of the world.” Again: “Every person who allows himself to think that an adulterer must be wicked adds his stone to the prison in which the source of poetry and (purity and love) [beauty and life] is incarcerated by ‘priests in black gowns’!”³

²As an indication of how far-flung the discussion is, attention is called to the fact that Italy’s dictator, his Excellency Benito Mussolini, has contributed a pretentious article to one of the popular American magazines on “Marriage,” dealing with some of the modern problems arising in connection therewith. (See Hearst’s *Cosmopolitan Magazine* for October 1928.) One paragraph is of first-rate importance and worthy of consideration as it fittingly rebukes a too-common evil of levity in relation to the marriage state:

The marriage contract should be engaged in with due care for its importance and due regard for the high purpose of its function. Marriage is not a travesty on life. It cannot be made the subject for pleasantries in the columns of the daily newspapers, or the target for farcical thrusts on the stage. Actors and actresses blessed with simple mediocrity in the drama often find humor to be exploited in references to the married state or to the man with a family. . . .

The social conscience must be made stern against any influence which effects a travesty on the sacred purposes of a married existence. Marriage and family life are hallowed institutions, fitting into the fabric of the state in harmony with its function and growth. (45, 175)

³*Our Changing Morality*, 14–15. [These three quotations are from Bertrand Russell, “Styles in Ethics,” in Freda Kirchwey, ed., *Our Changing Morality* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1924), 14–15.]

From these excerpts may be judged somewhat the spirit in which sex questions, love, marriage, and divorce in that symposium are discussed.

Second; another typical book on this line is *The Right to Be Happy*, by Mrs. Bertrand Russell. Her chapter on “Sex and Parenthood” is the chapter that represents the very heart of her book, and it should be entitled, “A Plea for Unbridled License in Sex Relations.” Perhaps I ought to forewarn the reader that this theme of necessity requires great frankness in the use of terms that are generally regarded as better unused for the general reader. To secure a right understanding of the subject must be my excuse for repeating some of these plain terms.

In the opening paragraph of the chapter referred to in Mrs. Russell’s book, a statement is made that “starvation or thwarting of the instinct of sex love,” which would include, of course, sex self-restraint, “causes more acute unhappiness than poverty, disease or ignorance.”⁴ **Under In** the regime proposed under this scheme set forth in *The Right to Be Happy*, this question is asked: “What hinders us from establishing a social system in which young men and women, who are out in the world earning, may ⟨not⟩ enter into open temporary sex partnerships, without harm to the work and legitimate ambitions of either?”

A rather bold question, and this question is answered by the author as follows:

Nothing whatever, excepting our false picture of woman, and our ingrained ascetic belief that sex is wicked if enjoyed and not immediately succeeded by the pains and anxieties and penalties of parenthood. Yet such companionships, now despised and concealed, would work great changes in the character of individuals.⁵

Undoubtedly it would! Again: “The idea of sin must be banished as must any demand for special service or sacrifice by women. . . . There would be passionate griefs, disappointments and broken ideals, but none of this is so damaging to personality as atrophy. . . . Men frequently regret what the moralist calls pre-marital indiscretions; and pre-marital experience for woman is definitely still thought a crime. . . . It is not impossible that a time may come when pre-marital experience will no longer be regarded as a crime, or even as an indiscretion”! “The superstition of ⟨jealousy⟩ [chastity] is a part of that same false psychology which makes moral virtue consist in emptiness and abstention.”⁶ Such is the spirit of the discussion throughout the book. ~~to which attention is called.~~

⁴Russell, *The Right to Be Happy* [newspaper clipping in Draft 1].

⁵Russell, *The Right to Be Happy*.

⁶Russell, *The Right to Be Happy*.

(b) *Church Treatment.* With equal frankness in magazines and the daily press, this question is debated. I think, however, I shall get the points of the debate before the reader best if I call attention to a very noted paper presented at the American Episcopal Church Congress held in San Francisco, in July, 1927.

This paper has resulted in very much criticism of its author, the Rev. Henry H. Lewis, of Ann Arbor, Michigan. His paper carried this title: "Moral Standards in an Age of Change."⁷ The intent of this topic so introduced was to bring out first, what changes are taking place in moral standards; second, how these changes are related to Christian standards which the church proclaims; and third, the message of the church in relation to "the existing facts." Of necessity I give a few excerpts from this paper, especially on that division of the topic that deals with "the existing facts":

New grouping of society's units. "The first thing, I believe," said the author, "which strikes us all is that we have largely substituted for the family groups other and larger groups." And then,

a generation ago, the home, the children, the cousins, the neighbors made the all important nucleus around which life was built and maintained. There was a sound honor, a simple goodness, a charm about it all. Today that scene is seldom repeated.

Yet that picture he draws for us was only a generation ago, and he now declares that it is seldom repeated! "The emphasis has shifted." Continuing he says:

We have other groups which form the centers around which life revolves; for older brother and sister in college—the fraternity and sorority; for mother, her reading or social clubs or health culture group; for father, the Rotary or Kiwanis, or lodge—clubs of all kinds—not to mention hotels for men, and hotels for women. In any discussion of the present moral situation such new groupings, which often have usurped the central place of family life, should be recognized. . . . The philosophy of many is to live for the moment, and to get the most out of life? . . . Is it any wonder that we have a behavioristic psychology which tells us that the main thing in life is to express ourselves, or get the greatest thrill we can?

That is held up to be the modern goal to which life is moving; and it is not difficult to see under it the old formula "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Again he says: "With such a philosophy it is hard to find a definite purpose toward which one is going."

⁷Russell, *The Right to Be Happy*.

In other words, modern life is losing its sense of direction, and seems not to appreciate or understand or even believe that there is a great objective in this earth life of man. A little further on the author says: “The result is that many an individual has an independence which amounts to complete disregard of anyone else.” Then he cites the fact that science is playing an important part with reference to moral standards. ~~He says:~~

Effect of science on morals.

The introduction of science is the outstanding fact of our time, and in morals science has created an entirely new moral situation. You have done away with that old but very effective weapon which has deterred many a person from going beyond the accepted moral code—fear of consequences. That fear no longer rests in the breast of any scientifically educated man or woman, and along with the passing of that fear is also going a vast amount of ignorance and misinformation upon the whole sexual relationship. The results are only partially manifest. To many young people what used to be considered lapses from the moral code are now considered to be acts which are as natural as eating and drinking. Indeed, youth often decide on the basis of expediency or “worthwhileness” whether sexual intercourse should be indulged in, never thinking of any after effects, because they believe there will be none.

They see no harm in it—science will protect them, and science generally does. Even with those who do not go so far, the idea that many of us had, that such things as petting or over-familiarity with the opposite sex, should be saved at least until the time of engagement, if not until marriage, on the basis that married life would be happier if one did—this has disappeared.

The youth of the day we know are not appealed to by any such idea. . . . Whatever we may think of such conduct, the thing for us to notice is that it does exist, and that largely because of scientific knowledge many people are finding reasonable justification for doing things they never would have thought of a generation ago.

Church unity on marriage lacking. The foregoing was the presentation of “the facts” in that **aforsaid** church congress! Further on the discussion shows how these modern changes as to the marriage institution are related to Christian standards which the church proclaims. Of course, there can be but one answer to that, and that is that the conduct of modern life represented by these “facts” ~~are~~ **is** revolutionary of all moral ideas of the churches. They must have credit for that, though they answer with varying voices, and there is a lack of unity in proclamation from the various divisions of Christendom. The churches are supposed to voice the law of God with reference to such

matters. Those in controversy with them say “that would be all right if we only knew what the law of God was.” And indeed here “the church,” having reference to all Christendom—all divisions and subdivisions of it—is at a disadvantage in meeting that flippant, rather than profound remark. **This** because of a lack of unity in their ideas with reference to what the law of God is.

The other point to be considered, and which was considered in the discussion at the Episcopal Church Congress on the occasion referred to, is: “What is to be the message of the Church in relation to these existing facts?”

Companionate marriage. Just at present the church seems not to have clearly answered this question; but within the churches there are those who would make the answer in such form as not only to condone these conditions that are here pointed out, but would make them respectable by legalizing them. Hence arises the suggestion of “companionate marriage,” accompanied by birth control, and by easy divorces; which means when considered in its effects, free love legalized. That is the meaning of the movement when stripped of all its pretenses and its disguises.

It is merely a form of marriage which is to continue as long as the parties to it desire the relationship to continue, but which may be dissolved mutually or at the pleasure of either party: divorce is to be easy. The object is not offspring and family and permanence of the home, but companionship, and pleasure, and sex liberties without the consequence or responsibility of children. These may be limited or eliminated according to desire.

It would not be difficult to forecast what the effect would be if such a scheme should be carried into effect. It would greatly weaken the marriage institution, and tend to the destruction of family life. “Home” would be a word without meaning! The “contract” of the “companionate marriage,” held lightly from the first, and designed to be easily dissolved, would stand little or no strain; would leave the parties to it free to contemplate other possible associations, free to seek them, constituting mate-hunting a continuous performance, wrecking all continence and inevitably resulting in the destruction of chastity both of mind and conduct; and instituting practically a free-love regime to the confusion of stable marriage, and family life.

The effect of easy divorce. What would be the effect of breaking down the moral restraints in sex relations may well be judged by the new laws governing divorce in England. England has long been renowned

for the stability of her family life. She in the past has made divorce as difficult as possible by her laws. A few years ago, however, England began granting what since have been called “secret divorces,” that is, divorces without publicity, limiting the press to publication of the facts in barest outline, and without the scandal that usually attaches to such trials. The result has been a great multiplication of divorce cases; in London alone rising from about five hundred in 1901, to more than two thousand four hundred cases in 1927; showing that if you make divorce easy by making its processes secret even, it results in greatly increasing divorces—a conceded evil because of the disruption of family life. “It would be difficult to guess how far the ease and popularity of divorce,” says one thoughtful observer, “may be making inroads into that constancy and tolerance which used to be considered the great glory of English family life.”

Existing sex and social conditions. That conditions are now bad in relation to sex life and social life, admits of no doubt. It was reported in 1927 that there were six million young men in our country (United States) of marriageable age who refused to take upon themselves the responsibility of marriage and family, largely because of the economic difficulties involved. As it would be unreasonable to suppose that this large body of the youthful manhood of the country abstained from sexual pleasures, such a condition proves, even of itself, how widespread promiscuous and unlawful intercourse must be, and what extent of prostitution. In the school and college life, as well as in the industrial life of our country, so many are already said to be involved in “companionate marriage,” and are living in defiance of the law in relation to such matters, that it is urged that their method of life should be legalized! Granting that ~~all~~ this deplorable condition may ~~be true~~ exist, yet take away the restraints that now exist, and there would be evoked the spirit of absolute recklessness which will mean the destruction ~~of all idea~~ of family life and home, the basic unit of civilization. How may the spendthrift be cured? By filling his pockets with money? Is that the cure for reckless spending? Granting that the social evils that exist are appalling, will they be made less appalling by declaring them respectable, by legalizing such relations as “companionate marriages,” with its birth control, its easy and inexpensive divorce system?

Other phases of the social evil. This effort to meet the conditions presented by “flaming,” modern youth, as yet unmarried, but involved in sex relations without legal sanctions, is but one phase of the social evil; there are others, and these **evils are to be found** among those

who have already entered into the marriage status. Among these evils are, notably, the increasing love of pleasure, by indulgence in the sensual delights of sex without incurring the risks, the pains and responsibilities of parenthood. Or, if a concession must be made to the convention of family under marriage, then offspring among such people, it is thought, must be limited to one or at most two children. This among the wealthier and educated classes, where wealth creates opportunity for leisure and artificially stimulates desire for greater variety of entertainment with diminishing effort, and an increasing sense of luxury and freedom ~~of~~ **from** responsibility. As large families would be a hindrance to all this self indulgence, large families are cancelled out of the reckoning by that class of the population best qualified, in a material way, to meet the obligations of large families.

This practice of limiting families by so-called "birth control" leads to many evils, physical and moral and spiritual. It endangers and wrecks the health of women, since it involves them in methods for prevention of conception, and *foetus* destruction, leading frequently to abortions and to infanticide, which is murder. Prevention, both by mechanical and chemical means, endangers the health of women who indulge it, impairs vitality, shatters nervous energy and deteriorates the race. The moral effect of such methods of living is nothing less than disastrous. It brutalizes and makes a shame of sexual pleasure itself, and kills the sentiment of love which alone refines the act to endearment. It ministers to the gross desire for sexual promiscuity; for with a felt security, through knowledge of a preventative nature from consequences that would expose infidelities to the marriage covenant, temptations to fornications and adulteries are greatly multiplied and the moral tone of a community greatly lowered, if not destroyed.

The baneful effects of all this frequently appear in the divorce courts. It is the divorce record of England **in the year 1927** that in forty percent of the divorce cases the couples seeking separation were childless, and in thirty percent of the cases they had but one child! These facts tell their own story. A thoughtful writer commenting upon the above state of facts declares:

Children create a bond which influences parents to think many times before they give way to divorce, and this may develop the tolerance of each other's faults and characteristics without which no marriage can be happy. But the bond being absent there is not incentive to overcome the obstacles to a satisfactory union of a man and a woman, and divorce results.⁸

⁸"The New Age," December, 1927.

It will be said perhaps that in all this there is nothing new; that these several recognized evils constituting menaces to the marriage institution, to the family, to the integrity of community life, to national life, and to civilization itself, have of a long time now been trumpeted by prophets of evil, and yet the marriage institution persists, the family survives, children are regularly born in constantly increasing numbers in most nations; and while it is recognized that many evils and dangers abound, they always have existed more or less, yet there seems to be no real cause for alarm **for** human nature is essentially sound and it seems likely that our cherished institutions will somehow be preserved. A comforting line of comment, doubtless; but shallow and inadequate to the world's present needs, and not at all reassuring in face of the conditions that now obtain and the changing mental attitude of the present generation toward the aforesaid cherished institutions. In that changed mental attitude lies the immediate danger to marriage and all that it concerns.

Moral standards and changes. A word in relation to this phrase "moral standards" as used above. In commerce and trade we have standard weights and standard measures. It will have to be conceded, I think, that in the world of trade and commerce, there is more or less fraud and trickery, of theft even; of false values fraudulently imposed upon the unsuspecting. How shall these evils be corrected? By tampering with standards of weights and measures? Or by demanding that the thing sold shall be honestly sold and shall be of proper weight, of proper measure, of the agreed number of feet or yards or pounds? Make commercial trade, and industrial transactions conform to standards of weights, lengths, measures and values. **And so with marriage and its obligations. Let it be completed marriage, which is righteousness; and not mutilated marriage, which is sin.**

Position of the Church ~~of Jesus Christ~~ in the New Dispensation on marriage. I have gone into the consideration of all these things so far because I want to consider the position of the Church of Christ in the New Dispensation in relation to these very important subjects.

What is the message of the Church of the Latter-day Saints to its own people about these vital questions of sex, morality, and of marriage? What message on these subjects has ~~it~~ **she** for the world? Or has ~~it~~ **she** no word to give? I think ~~it~~ **the Church of the New Dispensation** has a message both for ~~its~~ **her** own people and for the world. Moreover that ~~word~~ **message** comes without uncertainty, and

under such sanctions of divine authority that heed should be given to it.⁹

The message of the Church. It starts with the great principle of Christ's Sermon on the Mount: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all **these** things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). "Seek" not one's own conceptions of righteousness, not one's neighbor's **conception of righteousness**, not human standards at all; for "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Then, with reference to righteousness, men may easily be mistaken about it. Apart from the law of God's righteousness, men are likely to place wrong emphasis upon this or that part of righteousness, distorting it and perhaps making it of no avail. Men are subject to misconceptions ~~upon~~ upon generalizations about righteousness; but there can be no doubt with reference to the righteousness of God, and the righteousness of his law. And when men make the law of God their standard of righteousness, and the measure of their duty, they occupy sure ground. That is where the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands. The membership of that Church accept their moral duties as growing out of the commandments of God. They hark back in their conception of things in relation to the laws of God's righteousness, back to the beginning, when it was said by the divine Creator: "We will prove them herewith (preexistent spirits that were to become men in earth life), 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, **in** the sum of **them**, the revealed righteousness of God; and the obedience of man to that righteousness is the full measure of his duty, and the acme of human morality.

The law of chastity. In the Sermon on the Mount, as we have already seen, the Christ gave the supreme law of chastity that is still of binding force to those who make any pretension of following the Master, or, **of following** effectual purity; namely, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh (up)on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery [with her] already in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28). That, I say, holds not only as to those who are in the marriage relation but to those who have not yet entered into the marriage relation. Purity of mind, chastity of thought, as well as chastity of conduct is God's great law upon this subject. And when the Lord repeated that law of

⁹See note at end of chapter [555-59].

chastity in the New Dispensation of the gospel, he made these important additions to it, by saying that whosoever “looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out” (D&C 42:23). That is, cast out of the Church.

That is the message and the warning **which** the Church of the Latter-day Saints has for ~~its~~ **her** membership. To the world the Church declares that she regards as her moral standards the law of God. That law requires and demands purity of thought as well as chastity in conduct; and this as well before marriage as afterwards. The Church takes no part in striking down the restraints that a wholesome public opinion and the surviving fragments of God’s law among the Christian sects of the world projects about these problems of sex, morality, and marriage. The correct way of meeting these problems is by preaching repentance to those who violate the laws governing such relations. The Church of the New Dispensation stands for sanctity of the family and its permanency. In proof of this I call attention to our marriage ceremony as performed in the holy temples—the ceremony which ends not with a covenant “till death us do part,”¹⁰ but with a covenant which extends into eternity—“for time and all eternity!”¹¹ That is the guarantee of the Church to all the world that the Latter-day Saints believe in the permanency of marriage and of the home. Marriage, family, and the home have contributed so much to the happiness, peace, and progress of mankind, and built up and maintained such civilization as exists in the world today, that it may be trusted to achieve still greater things throughout the eternities in which men will live. The family founded upon true and complete marriage—marriage for companionship and marriage for family—becomes not only a sacred unit in our mortal life, but it will continue to be a sacred unit also in the eternal life toward which men are moving.

Per contra: Facing the real modern problems. Meantime, however, is nothing to be said of the real difficulties attendant upon the economic and industrial changes that have come over the world in recent

¹⁰Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer*, “Solemnization of Marriage.”

¹¹*The Appropriateness of the wedding ring in the marriage ceremony of the Latter-day Saints:* In view of the eternity of the marriage covenant by the Church of the Latter-day Saints, no people more appropriately may use the wedding ring in the marriage ceremony as a symbol of its nature. The circle is the most perfect of geometrical figures—the symbol of completeness and of eternity; therefore, by them, the wedding ring may most fittingly be used as the symbol of the marriage covenant.

years, making for many the ideal family marriage more difficult of realization? Nothing of the childless marriages, or the very, very limited offspring in the marriage life of the highly educated and the wealthy classes on the one hand; and of the over-prolific poor and ignorant and even criminal classes on the other hand? Undoubtedly something needs to be said upon all these problems; but surely nothing like what is being presented by the ultra, would-be “reformers” should be said. Their scheme is no panacea for these recognized ills of modern social life.

Briefly, for the really criminal classes, of both sexes, marriage and family should be prohibited. They should be barred [from] the propagation of their kind!^a

What should be said to the highly educated and wealthy classes who are shirking their responsibilities, and duties to life and to society, should be in the way of admonition to repentance; and to acceptance of the law of God as the measure of their moral obligations in the married state, an appeal to sound reason and to conscience, that they become lovers of God and duty more than “lovers of pleasure[s]” (2 Tim. 3:4) and of ease and of luxury. Would such an appeal only be met with quiet smiles of contempt, or perhaps with shouts of derision from their gilded, childless palaces miscalled homes? Or by shouts of derision from their pillowed divans, or the banquet-laden tables of their club houses? Then be it so. Nothing more may be done than to make this appeal to plain duty. **That failing** let them perish with their luxury and love of it, as they will so perish, if they repent not, **and will die** unloved, unhonored, and unsung—leaving naught but a wrack behind!^b

Of the over-prolific poor and ignorant, multiplying beyond all reason of hope to provide for bare necessities, to say nothing of opportunities for good prospects in life, wholesome nourishment, decent clothing and

^aIn 1925, Utah followed a national trend by passing a law that provided for the sterilization of rapists and other institutionalized persons, if “by the laws of heredity [they were] the probable potential parent of socially inadequate offspring likewise afflicted.” Lester E. Bush, Jr., *Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints: Science, Sense, and Scripture*, Health/Medicine and the Faith Traditions Series (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 168. Such state laws were held to be unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in *Skinner v. Oklahoma ex rel. Williamson*, 316 U.S. 535 (1942).

^bRoberts paraphrases a well-known passage from Walter Scott’s “The Lay of the Last Minstrel,” 6.11–17: “Despite those titles, power, and pelf, / The wretch, / Concentred all in self, / Living, shall forfeit fair renown, / And, doubly dying, shall go down / To the vile dust, from whence he sprung, / Unwept, unhonour’d, and unsung.” We are grateful to Jesse Crisler for help in locating this reference. The final phrase is from Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 4.1.

education—for these, enlightenment and patient instruction, education; and such improvement in economic policies as will lead to betterment of industrial conditions. Mere generalities these, I know, but I may not go beyond generalities on this head in this writing. In the instruction to this class would fall proper sex information, by competent and conscientious teachers; not for the introduction of knowledge of mechanical and chemical means for prevention of conception, *foetus* destruction, or abortions, much less infanticide; but instructions in sex cleanliness and health; in prudential self-restraint, that shall not be onanism either, but based upon such regard for the health of mothers and welfare of offspring that there shall be periods of continence self-imposed—out of loving consideration for the wife and mother that shall make for respect of wifeness and motherhood, and keep the family without hailing distance of rugged well-being.^c Is this too much to expect of the classes to which such an appeal is to be made? Again, be it so; but this is the only appeal which in safety to the marriage institution may be made; adjustment by slow but persistent and patient methods of instruction against merely brutal self-indulgence. What is it Paul says of the mutual duties of man and wife in their intimate relations? “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (1 Cor. 7:5). If such admonition can hopefully be given in the interests of religious observances—fasting and prayer—why not invoke it in the interests of the well-being of wifeness and motherhood, and in the interest of the family and the home, and the church and the state? And why not hope for its achievement in the one case as in the other? In any event the processes of permanent reform will necessarily be by the slow processes of enlightenment, and not by the race-destructive methods proposed by the ultra “reformers.”

Already it is deplored that the highly educated and wealthy classes are so limiting their offspring that they are not perpetuating their class. What may be hoped for from a method likely to result in producing the same status in what we consent to call, for convenience, the great “middle class”—the rank and file of the people?

Hopes—Faith! Meantime, and fortunately, one may believe sufficiently in the soundness of human nature as to be confident that the

^cIn these comments about sex education, Roberts addresses a topic frequently discussed within the Church during his day. In the 1920s and 1930s, discussions of sex education in Church publications were “remarkably forthright.” Bush, *Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints*, 143–44.

program of the ultra “reformers” will not be projected into our modern life to any great extent; for humanity’s sake let us hope not; out of respect for the wisdom and the striving of our ancestors who sought for better things, and wrought into the fabric of church and state better things than these proposed by the ultra “reformers” of our times—for their sake, and their honor, let us hope the **ultra** “reformers” will not get far with their program to legalize vice; and especially for the sake of posterity let us hope not.

If one may hope for the failure of this evil program on the score of belief in the essential soundness of human nature generally, one may feel an increase of confidence in its failure when thinking of what influence the appeal will have upon the membership of the Church of the Latter-day Saints. For while I know this Church membership is not immune from the invasion of this pestiferous program, and there may be those among them who would give welcome to such canonization of vice as is proposed—yet that number can never be large nor influential. No, the program of the ultra modern “reformers” will never be an attractive marriage system, or rather anti-marriage system, among people of the New Dispensation. As a Church they stand committed to quite an opposite program from this. Their religion and their Church stand for the purity and the permanence of the home. For full and complete marriage, celebrated in their temples, open to all the membership in good standing, celebrated by a covenant not only “until death do them part,” but for “time and all eternity,” extending into and holding good in the immortal life brought to pass by the resurrection from the dead, of which the Christ was the first fruits.

Marriage to the Latter-day Saints means completed or perfect marriage—companionship and offspring—family. “Multiply and replenish the earth” is God’s commandment to them; and this, under the law of God, may be legitimately carried out only in wedlock. As for all the rest, their ideal is pure minds and clean lives, for only such can “see,” that is “realize,” God. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). Lust of the eyes, and of the mind, and of the heart, is forbidden by the law of God to them, either inside or outside of the marriage status (Matt. 5:27-28; D&C 42:22-23). And this ethic of sex relations and marriage, they hope to see become—by the grace of God—the **sex and marriage** ethic of the world.^d

^dThe material on pages 551-54 is taken almost verbatim from Roberts’s article, “Complete Marriage—Righteousness: Mutilated Marriage—Sin,” *Improvement Era* 31 (January 1928): 189-92.

Note: Appendage to chapter 55 [Plural marriage]

Anything which a Latter-day Saint writer may have to say upon the subject of marriage will be regarded distrustfully by many readers because of the relationship of his Church to a unique sort of plural marriage doctrine and practice which was inaugurated and upheld for a time by the Church; by reason of which circumstance great prejudice was aroused against that Church and especially with reference to any message it ~~may~~ **might** have on the subject of marriage. Since candor, however, requires that something should be said in relation to the subject in such a work as this, I prefer to say it here at the close of this chapter.

In 1831, in Hiram Township, Portage County, Ohio, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were engaged in a revision (sometimes, and generally, referred to as a “translation”) of the Old Testament. In the course of that work Joseph Smith was much impressed with the apparent approval and sanction which the Lord gave to those patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament period in the matter of their having “many wives.” He was told in answer to his questions that a plurality of wives as practiced by the worthy prophets and patriarchs, under the sanctions of God, was righteous and approved; and the time would come when plural marriages would be introduced into the New Dispensation. This time came some years later, and on July 12, 1843, the knowledge previously received was committed to writing as a revelation (see D&C 132).

Joseph Smith introduced the plural-wife feature of marriage into the Church of the Latter-day Saints both by taking plural wives himself, and giving them to others. Not so much because there was evidence of Bible sanction for the righteousness of such unions among the worthy and approved patriarchs and prophets of God, as from the fact that revelation to himself sanctioned that order of marriage and authorized it. “If any man espouse a virgin,” said the revelation,

and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, . . . then is he justified. . . . For they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to ⟨the Lord’s⟩ [my] commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by ⟨the⟩ [my] Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they ⟨might⟩ [may] bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of ⟨the⟩ [my] Father continued, that he may be glorified. (D&C 132:61-63)

There is nothing here or elsewhere in the revelation promising ease or happiness or pleasure; there is nothing but an exalted motive presented for this marriage system: the “bearing of the souls of men,” “replenishing the earth” with the race of men. Procreation of the race is emphasized as

the highest purpose of this phase of the marriage institution, all else incidental; and procreation under conditions the most favorable to the welfare of the offspring, and hence to the race. First in giving in larger measure progenitors of high character—men who have given evidence of upright, temperate, virtuous lives; women chaste, and willing to consecrate their lives to the duty of motherhood; to this end sacrificing earthly pleasure, including the exclusive companionship of the husband expected in monogamous marriage. As some women, against the promptings of natural inclinations of the social instincts, of the cravings for wedlock companionship, and the desire for offspring, will renounce the world and the noble office of motherhood itself, and retire into dismal retreats, and spend their lives in prayer and meditation, only emerging into the world to render service of teaching the youth, visiting the needy, or nursing the sick; so plural wives among the Latter-day Saints, and first wives who consented to their husbands entering into these relations, accepted the institution from the highest moral and religious motives. First as being a commandment of God instituted “for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men” (D&C 132:63); and, second, that they might bear the souls of men under conditions that gave largest promise of improving the race and bringing forth superior men and women who shall lead the way to that higher state of things for which the world is waiting; and which the first condition precedent to obtaining, is a consecrated fatherhood and motherhood, such as is contemplated in the plural marriage system of the Latter-day Saints.¹²

¹²On this phase of the subject, the Right Rev. D. S. Tuttle, D.D., LL.D.—formerly bishop of Montana, Idaho, and Utah; and for seventeen years a resident of Utah and therefore in personal contact with “Mormonism,” and later bishop of Missouri—has an enlightening passage. He says in a chapter on “The Mormons”:

I pause to remark that if some strength accrues to Mormonism from its adjustment to the nature of man, some unsuspected strength also is won to it by its appeal to the nature of woman. The self-sacrifice in woman, the appeal is made to that. One knows not much of human life if he is ignorant that one of the dominating characteristics of woman is the power of self-sacrifice. If self-sacrifice in woman is continually in evidence in mothers, in wives of worthless husbands, in sisters in religious communities, and in women giving up all in devotion to love or duty or religion, who wonders that the appeal to it, as in the matter of polygamy, strange as it seems, must be accounted an element of strength to Mormonism. As matter of fact, there were no more strenuous and determined upholders of polygamy than most of the Mormon women who were personally sufferers by it. To their nature it was a calamity and hateful. To their spirit it was religious duty and a call for self-sacrifice. Therefore they

The Saints did not accept into their faith and practice the plural-wife system with the idea that it increased the comfort, or added to the ease of anyone. From the first it was known to involve sacrifice, to make a large demand upon the faith, patience, hope and charity of all who should attempt to carry out its requirements. Its introduction was not a call to ease or pleasure, but to religious duty; it was not an invitation to self-indulgence, but to self-conquest; its purpose was not earth-happiness, but earth-life discipline, undertaken in the interest of special advantages for succeeding generations of men. That purpose was to give to succeeding generations a superior fatherhood and motherhood, by enlarging the opportunities of men of high character, moral integrity, and spiritual development to become progenitors of the race; to give to women of like character and development a special opportunity to consecrate themselves to the high mission of motherhood. Race-culture, then, was the inspiring motive of the plural-wife feature of this revelation on marriage. It was in the name of a divinely ordered species of eugenics that the Latter-day Saints accepted plurality of wives.

It should be observed also, in passing, that the Church of the Latter-day Saints never advocated the indiscriminate, or the general practice of a plural-wife system, under merely human, legal sanctions. Such a general practice would doubtless be mischievous and lead to the disasters which opponents have from time to time charged to the more limited and specifically guarded practice of the principle under what the Latter-day Saints held to be divine sanctions, restraints, and regulations. It was indeed a principle of religion to them, a holy sacrament, and not at all designed to become a general practice under merely human laws. It is unfortunate that the world outside of the Church was not impressed with this phase of the subject; for then it would have been apparent that the things the world argued against and fought against—a general plural marriage system free for all to adopt, considered to be destructive of the monogamous system and the menace to the home itself—was not the thing upheld and contended for by the Latter-day Saints, who believed that the privilege of plural marriage is to be limited to persons of high character, approved lives, and living under the most sacred obligations to chastity, and granted this privilege of the marriage system only under the most carefully guarded permission amounting to divine sanction. Such were the limitations put upon the practice of the plural feature of the marriage system of the Latter-day Saints.

were loyal to it, determined to live in it, and if need be, to die for it. Spirit, roused and active, evermore predominates over nature. (Tuttle, *Reminiscences of a Missionary Bishop*, 307-8)

Against this plural feature of marriage a series of Federal enactments were passed by the Congress of the United States, under the assumption that Congress held plenary power to legislate for the Territories. This series of enactments began in 1862 and continued intermittently until 1887, when what was known as the Edmunds-Tucker law was passed, which, in addition to increasing the penalties for violations of the law against plural marriage and its relations, also confiscated the Church property and dissolved the Church as a corporation. Even after this, still more drastic enactments were pending; but finally in September 1890, President Woodruff, and after every effort that could be made had been made before the courts to test the constitutionality of the law, moved thereto by an impression of the spirit of the Lord, announced the discontinuance of the system of plural marriage, and called upon the Latter-day Saints “to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land” (OD-1). This “Manifesto” as it came by usage to be called, was afterwards adopted by the Church in General Conference assembled, and is now the rule of the Church.

In this matter of plural marriage the Latter-day Saints are neither responsible for its introduction nor for its discontinuance. The Lord commanded its practice, and in the face of the sentiment of ages, and in opposition to the teachings of their own traditions, many of the Saints obeyed the commandment, and in the midst of weakness, of great difficulties, and dangers, sought to carry out the law as revealed to them. For ~~about~~ half a century they maintained its practice in the face of opposition sufficient to appall the stoutest hearts. They defended it in the public press, proclaimed it from the pulpit, debated it on the platform with many of those who chose to assail it, and practiced it in their lives, notwithstanding fines and imprisonments and exile followed as consequences. A whole generation was born and had grown to manhood and womanhood in this system, and the affections of family ties were entwined with it. Then, under the pressure of suffering brought upon the people through the laws of the United States, the Lord inspired the President of the Church of Christ to proclaim its discontinuance, and the people with sorrowful hearts submitted to the will of God thus expressed, and there the matter rests. If the labors and sufferings of the Church of Christ for this principle have done nothing more, this much at least has been accomplished: the Saints have borne testimony to a truth connected with marriage, sanctioned and approved of God in ancient times, and revealed anew in this present age.

It should be remembered that in the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times, all things are to be gathered together in one—“all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Eph. 1:10).

This Dispensation of the Fullness of Times is identical with the “times of ⟨the⟩ restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all ⟨the⟩ [his] holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). This prediction was made by St. Peter as something future from his day; and therefore, this principle and practice of plurality of wives by men and women of God in old Bible times, and with the approval of God, must at least be restored, as to the knowledge of it, together with other ancient truths; and witnessed to the world by the Saints and the Church of the New Dispensation, whatever else may become of it. And this was done as stated above; and it is left for God to vindicate his own truth, of which his people have borne record by suffering, in his own time and in his own way.

It is to be understood, of course, that the foregoing statements are but an academic setting forth of the plural marriage feature of the marriage system of the Church of the New Dispensation, and are not intended as propaganda of that feature.

Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: “Pratt-Newman Debate” and three sermons attached to the debate, on Bible marriage; Madden, *Thelypbthora*; Roberts, “History of the ‘Mormon’ Church,” chs. 40 and notes, 107 and notes, and 121; Roberts, *Outlines of Ecclesiastical History*, pt. 4, sect. 9 and note 5; Gen. 1-2; D&C 132; Official Declaration—1. For a discussion about Roberts’s views concerning the relationship between wife and husband, see pages 586-88 below. As to eugenics, see page 588.

After the last page of this chapter, Roberts appended a cover sheet to introduce an appendix consisting of “Analysis of Chapters for Lessons.” He added the handwritten note “**Intended to gather under this appendix at the end of the volume all the lesson analyses.**” In this edition, the chapter analyses, which consist of the subheadings in each chapter, have been gathered on pages 3-13 above.