

Mormon Scripture: The Articles of Faith, Part XXXV

by Marvin W. Cowan

This is our fifth installment on the 13th LDS Article of Faith. It says: “We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and we hope to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”

LDS Apostle James Talmage explained each Article in his book entitled the *Articles of Faith*. His chapter about the 13th Article is called “Practical Religion,” but it discusses subjects that are not even in this Article of Faith. Two of those subjects are the *requirement of tithing* and *the law of consecration* which required **all** of one’s property, time and talent to be dedicated to the service of God (the LDS Church). He said,

The (LDS) Church today follows the doctrine of tithe-paying...In the present dispensation the law of tithing has been given a place of *great importance*, and particular blessings have been promised for its faithful observance...The law of tithing, as observed by the Church today, is after all but a *lesser law*, given by the Lord in consequence of human *weaknesses, selfishness, covetousness, and greed*, which prevented the (Latter-day) saints from accepting the *higher principles, according to which the Lord would have them live*. Specific requirements regarding the payment of tithes were made through revelation in 1838; but, *seven years prior* to that time, the voice of the Lord had been heard on the subject of *consecration*, or the *dedication of all of one’s property*, together with his time, and talents, *to the service of God*, to be used as occasion may require...A system of unity in temporal matters has been revealed to the Church *in this day*, such is currently known as the *Order of Enoch*, or the *United Order*, and is founded on the *law of consecration* (pp. 435-439).

Notice that Talmage said tithing is of “*great importance*” but is a “*lesser law*” than the *law of consecration* or the *United Order*. He also said Mormons failed to live up to *the law of consecration* when it was revealed in 1831 because of their “*weakness, selfishness, covetousness, and greed*.” Yet, LDS leaders now eulogize those same Mormon pioneers as great examples to follow! But, if they were as bad in 1831 as Talmage described them, should Mormons today want to be like them? And if the *law of consecration is what the Lord would have Mormons live and is superior to tithing*, Mormons ought to be living it now unless they are no better than their forbearers in 1831.

In *Doctrine & Covenants* [D & C] 104:1-2 the Lord reportedly said the “**United Order** (is) an **everlasting order for the benefit of my church and for the salvation of men until I come with promise immutable and unchangeable.**” Verse 48 also commanded Zion (Independence, MO) and Kirtland, OH to operate under the United Order, but both attempts failed.

On August 9, 1874 Mormon Prophet Brigham Young said “concerning the **United Order**, I

wish you to understand that this is no new revelation; it is the order of the kingdom where God and Christ dwell; it has been from eternity and will be to eternity, without end... Thus saith the Lord unto my servant Brigham, Call ye, call ye, upon the inhabitants of Zion (Utah), to organize themselves in the **Order of Enoch**, in the New and Everlasting Covenant, for the furtherance of my kingdom upon the earth, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the *salvation* of the living and the dead" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 17, p. 154).

After reading D. & C. 85, LDS Prophet John Taylor said on September 21, 1878, "Referring to the **United Order**, the Lord has given us to understand that *whosoever refuses to comply* with the requirements of that law, his name shall *not* be known in the records of the Church, but *shall be blotted out*, neither shall his children have inheritance in Zion... It is the word of God to me; it is the word of God to you" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 21, p. 58).

The LDS have made several attempts to establish a **United Order**, but *every one of them failed*. So, obviously some didn't comply with it, but not one Mormon name has been blotted out of the LDS records because of it! LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie even said, "Early attempts to operate various *united orders failed*, but the **law of consecration** must yet be put into full force, and so the **United Order** or its equivalent must again be brought into being" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 813).

Since the United Order is **superior to tithing** and Jesus reportedly said in 1834 it is "an **everlasting order** for the **benefit of my Church and the Salvation of men until I come**" (*Doctrine & Covenants* 104:1), *Mormons should be living it now*. Since they aren't living it, did the Lord expect too much of them or did He even give this revelation?

Joseph Smith's revelation about consecrating **all of one's property** to the **United Order** in D. & C. 104:2-3 also promises, "inasmuch as those whom I commanded were faithful they should be *blessed* with a multiplicity of *blessings*; but inasmuch as they were not faithful they were nigh unto *cursing*." And verse 5 says, "A transgressor... shall be *cursed* in his life, and shall be trodden down by whom I will." Those are great incentives to obey the revelation!

Promises of blessing or cursing are also made regarding LDS tithing. In his *Articles of Faith*, Talmage said, "In the present dispensation the law of *tithing* has been given a place of great importance, and particular *blessings* have been promised for faithful observance... for he that is *tithed shall not be burned*" (p. 437 and D. & C. 64:23).

When LDS leaders and scripture threaten LDS with being *cursed* or *burned* for not tithing, their message contradicts the Bible. Biblical salvation and eternal life are *gifts* of God (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9) and are not based upon the amount of money a person gives to a church!

For those who want to read more on these subjects we suggest chapter 24 in *The Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, UT in 1952. We will continue our discussion of this Article of Faith next time.