

PRESIDENT RUDGER CLAWSON

My brethren and sisters: There is a large clock in the other end of this building, that is greatly illuminated. It is placed there for the benefit and help of the speakers. When I am sitting on my seat I can see the time clearly, but when I arise to speak in this great building, in the midst of this great congregation, I regret to say I go blind and cannot see the time (laughter).

I wish to commend and to congratulate Professor Lund and the Tabernacle choir, and the young lady soloist, for the anthem that was sung at the closing meeting this morning. It was magnificently done. The young lady has a wonderful voice. It went up and up to such a high note that I thought for a moment the drum of my ear was shattered, but it was not; and then she went up and up and up until it seemed to me that she stood on the edge of a precipice and would surely go over, but she did not. It was a wonderful performance, and the anthem this afternoon also was grand, impressive and beautifully rendered.

Day before yesterday, I was proud and high-minded and lifted up in my feelings. Through some strange accident, I got hold of the hat of President Penrose and wore it all the afternoon. I am free to confess that I could not fill his shoes, but I filled his hat (laughter).

VIOLATION OF MORAL LAW A FATAL AND DEADLY SIN

The President in the opening meeting gave the keynote to the conference by counseling obedience to law; obedience to divine law, and obedience to the law of the land. The divine law is always a righteous law and needs no repealing. The law of man generally, and in the main, is a righteous one. Sometimes the laws of man are not righteous, therefore when they are not righteous they ought to be repealed. Most of the speakers of the conference have touched upon this vital question from various angles. It would be well perhaps to treat it for a few moments from still another angle. Let me say, I feel that I am justified in saying, that there is no future for any nation that despises virtue, and continuously and persistently violates the moral law. This is a fatal and deadly sin. Whenever the cup of their iniquity is full, such nation or nations will be overthrown and suffer the displeasure of an offended God. This assertion, brethren and sisters, is attested by many examples of sacred as well as profane history.

AN EXAMPLE FROM PROFANE HISTORY

For instance, take Rome. One of the greatest and most powerful empires of the ancient world was the Roman Empire. It had in it the strength of iron to bruise, to crush and to break in pieces. It conquered many nations and kingdoms and brought them into subjection. The fear of Rome extended to all the known world of that day, and to be called a Roman citizen was regarded as a great dis-

tion. In the early days and years of Rome, as I have said, she was strong, she was invincible but in later years through yielding to the subtle influence of luxurious living and the violation of the moral law, she became weak, and was finally broken to pieces. A French editor, M. Guizot, gives us a short, vivid picture of the decline and fall of Rome, in the preface of *Gibbon's Rome*. This is what he said:

"The gradual decline of the most extraordinary dominion which has ever invaded and oppressed the world; the fall of that immense empire, erected on the ruins of so many kingdoms, republics and states, both barbarous and civilized, and forming in its turn, by its dismemberment, a multitude of States, republics and kingdoms; the annihilation of the religion of Greece and Rome; the birth and the progress of the two new religions which have shared the most beautiful regions of the earth; the decrepitude of the ancient world, the spectacle of its expiring glory and degenerate manners * * * such a subject must necessarily fix the attention and excite the interest of men, who cannot behold with indifference those memorable epochs."

Other examples in profane history might be given.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE

Let us turn for a few moments to sacred history: In the early years of the world the people became very wicked. Noah, a prophet and a righteous man, preached to them one hundred twenty years and pleaded with the people to repent of their sins and to forsake them, but to no avail. They were guilty of every kind and species of wickedness, and "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." And again the record says: "God looked upon the earth and beheld it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." It was then, God decreed that all flesh should be destroyed. He sent the flood, and the children of men were submerged, only Noah and his family escaping.

The Lord brought the children of Israel up out of Egypt and out of bondage with power and an outstretched arm. He brought them into the wilderness, he brought them to Mount Sinai, and there, with a demonstration of his power and might in the midst of thunders and lightnings, gave to them the moral law. It was bound up in the Ten Commandments—"Thou shalt not commit adultery." This law was strictly enforced among the children of Israel, and its violation was attended by severe penalties, and thus—mark you, brethren and sisters, were they measurably protected from that great sin. Finally the children of Israel were brought to the land of Canaan. Palestine, the land that was given by promise to Abraham and his seed, was inhabited by six or seven great nations, and the Lord commanded his people to go in and drive out those nations, to destroy them and to take possession of the land. This is what he said, if they would indeed obey his voice: "I will be an enemy unto thine enemies; I will be an adversary unto thine adversaries, for mine Angel shall go before

thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images."

It may be said by some, that God in this matter was cruel, that he was unmerciful, that this was a vengeful thing to do, but you must remember that the people in Canaan were steeped in wickedness, were guilty of every species of crime, were engaged in idolatry, and were violators of the moral law. Their cup of iniquity was full, they were ripe for destruction, and destruction came.

And the children of Israel went into the Promised Land and in those early years they were prospered and strengthened and upheld by the power of their Maker. Oh, what a blessed people! He smiled upon them and they also had prophets to minister to them in the things of God. But in later years, when they forsook the worship of God and turned to idolatry and ceased to observe the moral law, great distress and trial came upon them, and they were visited by great destruction.

MORAL LAW EMPHASIZED IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

In the meridian of time John the Baptist came in the wilderness preaching the gospel, the gospel of repentance, and Jerusalem and all Judea came to his baptism and when John perceived the wickedness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, he said to them: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance."

Jesus came later preaching the gospel and counseled the people to repent and receive it. It seems to me that the moral law was greatly emphasized in the incident of the woman who was taken in transgression. She was brought to Christ by the Pharisees who charged her with the crime of adultery, and they stood there before him impatiently. They were urgent for his condemnation upon the woman that they might take her out and stone her to death. Christ looked upon them intently, and then he knelt down and with his finger wrote in the sand then stood up again. The Pharisees were still urgent for his action, but he, perceiving the wickedness of their hearts, said: "He that is without sin let him cast the first stone." He again knelt and wrote in the sand, and then he stood up once more and looking around said to the woman: "Woman, where are thine accusers? Is there no man to condemn thee?" And the woman said: "Lord there is no man to condemn me." Now, you remember his sublime answer, brethren and sisters:

"Neither do I condemn thee. Go thy way and sin no more." But, mark this, he did not apologize for her sin, he did not excuse her, he did not condone the sin, but said: "Go thy way and sin no more." I think this is a wonderful example of God's mercy and also of God's justice, quite beyond us.

PAUL'S ANALYSIS

Paul the Apostle in his epistle to the Corinthians went deeper into the matter when he said: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Oh, how sublime! It is logical, it is philosophical, it is reasonable. We are the children of God, and he designates his children as temples, living temples of God. It is wonderful, it is beautiful! There are temples of wood and stone, but these are living temples.

PAUL'S INTERPRETATION AMPLIFIED BY THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

Now, brethren and sisters, we are of the children of Israel, and the great moral law that was made binding upon them is also equally binding upon us. It has been renewed to us in our day, and the language of Paul has been amplified, greatly enlarged, by a modern revelation. You will find it in Section 93, Doc. and Cov., where these wonderful words are recorded: "For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receiveth a fulness of joy. And when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy. The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple."

IF MAN IS IMMORAL HE IS WEAK AS WATER

So we are now under that great and important law. It is vital to our welfare, to our salvation. Go out upon the street. You may see a man standing there. He is wonderfully well developed, strong physically, strong mentally. Why, he may have been through college, a graduate. Oh, how well equipped he is for life! But I tell you, brethren and sisters, if that man is immoral he is as weak as water. Another man who is famous throughout the land as a lawyer, who can command his thousands and thousands of dollars, his knowledge is so desirable. But I tell you that if that man is immoral he is as weak as water. And still another man may have studied medicine and attained to great eminence. You may envy him. I tell you if he is immoral he is as weak as water. And take a young woman who has had every advantage of education and culture. She is accomplished, she can play the piano most beautifully, she may be a great writer, but I tell you, if that young woman is immoral she is as weak as water; because, remember, that the Spirit of God will not dwell in unholy temples. If I can leave that impression with you this afternoon, brethren and sisters, oh, how thankful I shall be.

I rejoice in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I know it is true. I do know that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith was and is his prophet, and that he stands at the head of this last dispensation. He was indeed a wonderful man, and, I apprehend, was a great spirit

in the spirit world before he came to this earth. I rejoice in this testimony, and I bear it to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The trio, "Lift Thine Eyes," was sung by Lola Leonard, Louise Watson, and Edna Gothberg.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

There has never been, within my recollection, anything to compare with the wonderful outpouring of people, to our semi-annual conferences, such as we have had during the past three days.

CONSIDERING A FOUR-DAYS CONFERENCE

I think that, perhaps, in the future it may be well—and we will seriously consider it—to have four days of conference. Several of our speakers limited themselves to sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen minutes, and, as you know, only two of the seven presidents of seventies have had the opportunity of addressing the vast congregations that have appeared in this building, and only one of the presiding bishopric. The suggestion made fifty-five years ago and carried by a vote of the people, that they continue the Conference for another day, if carried out at our next meeting, in six months from now, would, in all probability, give each of the brethren of the general authorities, and some of our mission presidents, an opportunity to express themselves without feeling very much limited for time. I am not sure but that the addresses of the three or four of our brethren, including the addresses of the presidency, that were beyond the short limit of fifteen to twenty odd minutes, gave the brethren who delivered them greater liberty of utterance, and a freer flow of the Spirit, than was enjoyed by those I had to request to make their addresses short. It is only fair to say that a great many of the Latter-day Saints have expressed to me, time and time again, the idea that if we cannot all find the time to bear our testimonies and deliver our messages at a general conference, it would be better to only have a number of us talk at one of the conferences, and the balance at the next one. But, I have felt in my heart an anxiety that each of those who are presiding over our missions throughout the United States, and each of the general authorities of the Church whom you have voted to sustain here this day—the twenty-six members that stand as the presiding authority in the Priesthood—should lift up their voices in each and all of our conferences and bear witness of the goodness of God to them. For that reason we have always had them speak, and occasionally we have heard from some others in addition. I have heard a great many people say that one cannot very well deliver much of a sermon in ten minutes, but some of the very choicest of all the choice sermons that I have ever heard in this building, have been delivered in five and ten minutes.