

I know that if we will serve God, if we will keep his commandments, if we will honor the priesthood that has been conferred upon us, if we will sustain those whom he has called to preside over us, with faith and devotion, when the time shall come for us to go hence we will find our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and we will receive at the hands of the Master of heaven and earth that glorious welcome home: "Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of thy Lord." And I bear witness of it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

ELDER STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

One of the tests of worth is the test of time. Whatever has been tried over a long period of time and not found wanting is worthy of our consideration. I have observed with deep satisfaction that since the opening remarks of President Grant the speakers of this conference have reverted to the fundamentals, those principles which have long been in force and effect, and which lie at the very basis of our theology and our philosophy. I sincerely trust that I may be in consonance with these thoughts and expressions as I enter a plea for reverence for God, for sacred places, for sacred establishments and institutions.

Some one has said that the national characteristic of America is lawlessness. It is a terrible indictment. I hope that it is not warranted. Whether it be so or not, we are all persuaded that there is too much of flippancy; there is too little serious consideration and respect for established institutions and for worthy practices which have been tried and proven over a period of many years.

REVERENCE FOR GOD

I am one who believes that morality and righteousness have their inception and bases in religion. I believe that God is the author of all good, and that there is no good which emanates from any source in this world other than from our Father and our God. Respect and reverence for his holy name are essential to spiritual growth and development, and in my judgment they are essential to a proper attitude toward all institutions of society, all our relationships and everything that is worth while in this life. No man can be disrespectful of Deity and have in his heart the proper attitude toward the creations of Deity. A man who properly understands his relationship to God and the endowments which he has received from the Creator, will be filled with reverence and thanksgiving. After all, reverence is an attitude which shows itself in a deferential behavior.

REVERENTIAL RESPECT FOR THE BODY OF MAN

God has given us everything we have in life. He has made it possible for us to live in mortality. It is by reason of his beneficence that we enjoy our very bodies. We who believe in the gospel know that

God is the Father of our spirits, and that as the Father of our spirits he has permitted them to dwell in tabernacles of flesh. These tabernacles assume a holy significance, and a man with such a conception cannot pollute or defile his body without offering affront to God who gave it to him. So I plead first for a more reverential respect for the body of man. It is a sacred temple wherein dwells our eternal spirit, and it is entitled to our utmost deference and reverence. If we could but teach the youth of the land this high conception that has come to us, they would be more loath to smoke cigarettes, to take liquor into their bodies, and those other poisonous substances which tend to disintegrate and render less efficient and less pure these holy tabernacles.

THE HOME A SACRED INSTITUTION

We need more reverence for the sacred institution of home. The home is a religious institution. It has its inception in religious ceremony, and to those of the Church who understand its great significance, it constitutes the very basis of our hope of exaltation in the celestial life to come. All the finest of its products are spiritual. It is indeed a sacred institution, and reverence for those who by right exercise authority in that institution in my judgment is indispensable to the inculcation of those characteristics and attributes which are essential for good citizenship in the country and a proper attitude toward God our Father. Boys and girls who refer to their parents as "the old man" or "the old woman" are taking a wrong course to bring them into proper attitude toward government, society and religion. There are old sayings in the Bible which support this position:

"Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

No greater commandment ever came from Sinai than that one.

"My son, keep thy father's commandments and forsake not the law of thy mother. Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest it shall lead thee, and when thou sleepest it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee."

"A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother."

Those principles have been tried; they have been incorporated into the lives of great peoples. They have made possible the establishment of the greatest institution of society—the home. I commend them to the youth of the land, and I commend them to parents. I sincerely trust that there will be such discipline, such loving, kindly, sympathetic discipline in the home that there will be proper and adequate respect for the head of the household. No good woman will ever begrudge to her husband his rightful position as the head of the household, and I am constrained to think that very much of our lack of respect, much of the flippancy and lawlessness arise from the fact that there is no well organized, clearly recognized authority in the home. It seems now to be the attitude of parents, in many cases at least, that a child shall

have the liberty and privilege of doing what he wants to do. I have heard many a parent say: "I want my boy to do what he wants to do." As for me I want my boy to do what he ought to do. I hope that he will want to do what he ought to do. So much of license, so much of so-called liberty prevails that boys and girls are not constrained as I feel that they should be constrained in sympathy and mercy and kindness to take the proper course in life. I rejoice in the fact that the heads of our households are men who hold the priesthood of Almighty God, and I know of no place or no institution in which the dignity, the power and the influence of the priesthood may be more effectively exercised than in the institutions of our homes,

THE SIN OF PROFANITY

Men, do not swear. God has said he would not be mocked. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Perhaps there are few things that tend more to produce an irreverent attitude than this pernicious, vile habit of profanity. What a useless thing it is. What a defilement it is of the pure language which we have. I plead with men everywhere not to use the name of God in vain. I do not see how a man can love God and damn him any more than he could love his wife and damn her. We shall tear down the respect of the youth of the land for the name of Deity if we use that name in profanity. We read the words of the Savior:

"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all."

When men have the knowledge that we possess and they blaspheme the name of God, I fear for the penalty that may accrue from that sin. God help us to speak pure English, to control our tempers, and to set an example in that respect worthy of the emulation of our juniors. Men of the world blaspheme—I sometimes feel a degree of charity toward them—in ignorance of that which they do. It is not so with us.

RESPECT FOR LAW

Respect for the law is an old theme. It is commonly brought to our attention these days. I think that there are two classes of people who are chiefly responsible for the lack of respect which exists for the law and for established institutions of government. One class is those who hold office and the other class is those who do not. I don't mean by that to say that all men who hold office are responsible for the condition which exists; not by any means; nor are all citizens. I have always felt that one of the essential things to breed a wholesome respect and regard for the law of the land and the established institutions of government is the honorable, worthy conduct of the men who are elected to office, and whenever any man who is entrusted with a public duty and public authority abuses his office and attempts to reward himself at the expense of his government and the citizenry, and does not conduct himself with that dignity and propriety which is becoming one invested

with his authority, he does more to tear down respect for law and authority than dozens of good men can do to build it up. I want to tell you that the youth of the land are wise in their day and generation. They are sophisticated, they are observant, and when they see men plead in fiery oratorical fashion for the support of the Constitution and in their grandiloquence wildly protest allegiance to the flag of the country, and then come to know that those same men are grafters, corrupt in office, they at once lose regard for the institutions of government and for the officials who stand at the head of government. And too on the part of the citizenry: Men who support such men, men who go around campaigning for them and men who become the beneficiaries of their dishonest practices, are likewise doing more to tear down that attitude which is essential to the preservation of good government than thousands of good people can do to sustain it. It takes honor, real genuine integrity, in order to beget a respect for law and for her institutions. It is such people who today are setting at naught the laws of the country, and such public officers who with seeming ease of conscience are failing to observe their oaths, who are sowing the seeds which may mature some time in the violence of rebellion and revolt against the great principles of equity and liberty and justice which lie at the foundation of our beneficent government. It hurts me, it grieves me every time I see men of influence violate any ordinance, any statute, any law which has been passed and established by proper authority in this country. Enough has been said in this conference on that subject. I here pronounce the recognition of those laws and their observance as indispensable to the creation and maintenance of reverence and respect for the Constitution and for the established orders of society.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

Reverence for God, as I said in the beginning, is the fundamental thing. Reverence for God comes of love for God, but love of God arises out of faith in him, and out of an understanding of his greatness, his majesty, his goodness, his kindness and his mercy. My God is my Father, my eternal parent, the giver of every good gift to me, the conservator of my life, my relationships, my family, my blessing. Do I revere him? I bow at his feet. I humble myself in sheer praise and thanksgiving and gratitude for the manifestations of all his kindness to me. There is no question about reverence because the seed and foundation of reverence are in my philosophy, in my testimony, in my soul and in my heart. So it is essential that the gospel of Christ be preached to the people of the world that they understand this fatherhood of God, that they understand that all the progress made in this life is by and with his consent and his guidance.

God bless us, my brethren and sisters, that his holy institutions, our places of worship, our homes, the sacred ordinances of the gospel, our temples, our families, old age, all sacred things may receive our deference, our undying respect and our reverence, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.