

please. Even habitual Church attendants often surprise and shock one by their irreverent behavior in the house of prayer. Those persons are not ignoramuses or barbarians; they are simply undeveloped in the virtue of reverence.

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WHAT LIES BEHIND DECADENCE OF REVERENCE?

Why is it that reverence is apparently in a state of decadence? Is it due to our improper reading? The press is constantly exploiting the sordid side of human nature, calling our attention to moral collapse and degradation, and it may be that our familiarity with vice in its varied forms is taking off the edge of our sensibility so that we no longer respond readily to the things which are noble and high. What has the stage to do—do you think—with our loss of reverence? It is lamentable that so large a proportion of plays move in that border-land which lies between decency and indecency. The openly immoral play cannot as yet be endured, but the play that is most popular is often a play which skirts the edges of the realms of the indecent. Theater audiences seem to like a sentence now and then which looks in the direction of the unclean, and to relish an occasional insinuation or remark which leads down to the mud. Our imagination may be so coarsened by the realism through which it travels as to lose the capacity for feeling the rapture of the sense of awe.

REVERENT PEOPLE LAW-ABIDING

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

I speak of Reverence in connection with obedience to law because a reverent person is law-abiding. No one can love God sincerely and harbor in his heart enmity for his fellow men. Enmity is sin and "who-soever committeth sin doth lawlessness; for sin is lawlessness."

Brethren and sisters, the time calls for Latter-day Saints everywhere to demonstrate by deeds as well as by words that we love God, revere sacred things and places, and obey, honor, and sustain the law. God help us in our efforts so to do, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Choir and the congregation sang the hymn, "O, Say, What is Truth?"

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I have been enjoying to the fullest extent the fine meetings of this General Conference. I bear witness that we have listened to servants of the Lord giving us instruction. They were inspired by him who is the Author of our being. Unselfish advice has been offered to us by those whom the Lord has called to teach.

Conditions in the world at the present time are a problem to me because of the diversity of interests that seem to be operating every-

where. Selfishness, jealousy and hatred have taken possession of the human family to a remarkable degree and warfare is in the air.

HELPED BY WISE COUNSELS

When I was a child I had great satisfaction in hearing those who addressed us in this building. As a youth I used to come quite regularly to the Sunday afternoon services held here and listen to the great choir and organ and to the instructions of the servants of the Lord. Most of those men have finished their work and passed to the other side, but from their wise counsels I received much that has helped me in my life to choose the better part, and to obtain happiness in the companionship of our Father's children.

I learned while young to revere those who have been called to direct us in this Church and have continued so to do.

It is only six months ago that sitting here with us was our beloved brother, Alonzo A. Hinckley. We did not know at that time that he was to leave us so soon. One by one, stalwarts who have given the best that was in their lives to encourage, uplift and bless us are called home to their reward. Others are raised up to take their places who are willing to carry on, and notwithstanding the responsibilities are great and the burdens heavy, men and women just as fine as the world has ever known have accepted the call to service in this Church, and many today are serving unselfishly for the blessings of our Father's children.

SCRIPTURE TEACHINGS APPROPRIATE TODAY

President Clark referred to the words of Jacob in the Book of Mormon. I feel to repeat a portion of what he read to us:

Now, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine office with soberness, that I might rid my garments of your sins, I come up into the temple this day, that I might declare unto you the word of God.

I recommend that when you go home that you read the second chapter of Jacob, all of it, for it is full of excellent advice and counsel, and if Jacob had been speaking today it could have been no more appropriate. He realized the responsibility of his leadership among the people and had the courage to counsel them.

"We are living in a day when we must choose for ourselves as did one of old. Read what this prophet said to Israel in the 24th chapter of Joshua. Read it all. It is excellent advice to us today. In warning the people Joshua said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve, * * * but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

THE PURPOSE OF CONFERENCES

As I look into the faces of this great congregation of wonderful men and women and listen to the tuneful voices of these sons and daughters of the living God, and realize that we are all here in the house of the Lord to worship and to be instructed, not by man only but by

the inspiration of our Heavenly Father, who is the Author of our being, my soul is refreshed.

If we have come in the spirit of repentance and humility, we have a right to receive instruction that is necessary for our development. If we have come to worship with the prayer in our hearts, "Father in Heaven, teach us," we are entitled to receive the promise that he has made that "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

We are here, not two or three, but a great multitude, privileged as are few of our Father's children in the world. We are living not only in the day in which he has spoken, but we are offered the opportunity to listen to the voices of men who receive his inspiration when they teach us. If therefore we fall into by and forbidden paths we will not be able to blame anybody but ourselves, because if we are teachable, if we are humble, if we are willing to do what the Lord would have us do, we have the information at hand, not only in the records that have been handed down to us by those who have given their lives that we might have the truth, but we also have the privilege of listening to the voices of living oracles who are as unselfish and faithful as those that we revere because of the records that they have left behind.

The adversary is not asleep. He is deceiving many and leading them to sin. Reference has been made to the fact that in our own community there are those who fail to appreciate their privileges. There are some who are teaching false doctrine; and some who are seeking to persuade men and women to violate the commandments of our Heavenly Father. There are those who pretend to be inspired and who would take the leadership of the people, if they were so permitted. Of course they are not capable to lead and in their own lives are living improperly, and the adversary is using them as tools by which others may be deceived.

THE PATH OF SAFETY

There is only one pathway of safety for me in this day and that is to follow those whom the Lord has appointed to lead. I may have my own ideas and opinions, I may set up my own judgment with reference to things, but I know that when my judgment conflicts with the teachings of those that the Lord has given to us to point the way, I should change my course. If I desire salvation I will follow the leaders that our Heavenly Father has given to us, as long as he sustains them.

If the members of this Church who find fault with the leaders of the Church and criticise those who are giving their very lives to bless and benefit us would only pause long enough to ask prayerfully, "Which of these teachers is it safe to follow?" they would have no difficulty in finding their right course and would sustain those whom the Lord sustains.

We are living in a day when we need humility, when we need charity, when we need patience, and we are living in a time when it is the privilege of every man and every woman to do great good by setting righteous examples.

I feel sad sometimes when I hear the unkind things that are spoken, not only of people in our Church, but of people in the world. Unkind things are not usually said under the inspiration of the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord is a spirit of kindness; it is a spirit of patience; it is a spirit of charity and love and forbearance and long suffering; and there are none of us who do not need all these virtues that are the result of the possession of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father.

KINDNESS TOWARDS THOSE WHO ERR

There are those who will make mistakes. There are those among us today that have gone astray, but they are the children of our Lord and he loves them. He has given to you and to me the right to go to them in kindness and love and with patience and with a desire to bless, seek to win them from the mistakes that they are making. It is not my privilege to judge some of these that have made mistakes and are still making mistakes, unless I am so called by reason of the authority that may be conferred upon me. But it is my privilege, if I see them doing the wrong thing, to in some way, if possible, turn them back into the pathway that leads to eternal life in the Celestial kingdom.

The Presidency of the Church have counseled us today. They are the representatives of our Heavenly Father, not only to this people, but they represent him to all the people of the earth. We would do well if we would magnify and honor these men he has placed at our head. They are men with human frailties, they will make mistakes, but if we will be as charitable to the mistakes that they make as we are to our own failures and mistakes, we will see their virtues as we see our own.

UNKIND CRITICISM UNBECOMING IN LATTER-DAY SAINTS

I stand here to plead with you, my brethren and sisters, not to permit words of criticism or of unkindness to pass your lips about those whom the Lord has called to lead us. Do not be found in the companionship of those who would belittle them or weaken their influence among the children of men. If you do, I can say to you that you will find yourselves in the power of the adversary. You will be influenced by him to go as far as possible from the pathway of truth, and if you do not repent you may find when it is too late that you have lost the "pearl of great price." Because of your selfishness and your blindness you will have been led away, and your loved ones who have given their very lives in order that you might enjoy the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be sorrowing on the other side of the veil because of your weakness and your folly.

You know we are all tied together by the great work that is being done in the temples of our Father, where families that have not been united before are brought together by the power of the Holy Priesthood. The Lord intended that every one of his sons and daughters should have the opportunity to be blessed, not only here upon the earth, but to enjoy eternal blessings.

Think of the devotion and the faithfulness of those who day after day go into these temples and officiate for those who have passed to the other side, and know this that those who are on the other side are just as anxious about us. They are praying for us and for our success. They are pleading, in their own way, for their descendants, for their posterity who live upon the earth, many of whom, because they have been unwise, have been betrayed into fighting the Church and Kingdom of God and opposing those who are its leaders.

INFLUENCE OF HOME

Brethren and sisters, I plead with you that when you return to your home you see to it that your children are properly taught. Only a few days ago I saw a letter from a man who had probably lived half his life. In writing to his father he said: "Your consideration for your loved ones, your teaching of me, the examples that you set me, have been an inspiration for me to do what the Lord would have me do. I have felt in following in your footsteps I would be safe." That was a wise father, that was a blessed father, who could plant in the mind of his son such confidence. The son has lived much in the world, but because of the conduct of the father—at least he gave his father credit in his letter—because of the example set in his home, he is today one of the stalwarts of this Church. He can live in the world and keep the commandments of the Lord. His anxiety to do good was inspired by the home in which he lived. He did not discover selfishness in the home, but unselfishness. The parents were not anxious to get all that they could and hold it selfishly for their own, but they went about seeking those who needed them, encouraging and blessing them. All the talking in the world would not have put into that man's heart that which he has today, but it was the example that was set by his parents, by those who lived in the home in which he lived.

I have no doubt there are hundreds of men and women, thousands of them, perhaps, in the communities in which we live and in the world, who would say the same thing of the teachings of their fathers and their mothers. But I fear there are some of us who are influenced by the customs of the world and are obsessed with the idea that we have to follow the crowd regardless of what they believe or do. In that case our example will not be a blessing but may destroy the happiness of our children.

Permit me to direct your attention to chapter 8 of 1st Nephi in the Book of Mormon wherein the Lord showed to Lehi in a dream or vision the condition of the people of the world and the influences that did and would exist among them. A few would seek righteousness but the multitude would seek pleasure and unrighteousness. He saw an iron rod along a path that could be followed that would lead those who held to it into a place of safety and happiness. Those who held on to the iron rod—and they were the minority—found the tree of life. The majority went into a large and spacious building that was shown to Lehi as the abiding place of those who did not understand or would not receive the truth.

They failed to gain an inheritance of celestial glory. Lehi was desirous that his family should hold to the rod and join him at the tree of life, but he was shown that there were those in his own household that would not do so. Are we living such lives that those who follow our example will find the tree of life?

SAFETY IN LIVING THE GOSPEL

God has spoken. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, is upon the earth, with power and authority. We live in the evening of the fulness of times. The world will soon be devastated with war and carnage, with plague and all the distresses that the Lord has promised unless they repent; but he has indicated that they will not repent, and distress must come.

You, my brethren and sisters, have been called out of the world. Opportunity has been offered to you to understand what we may expect and what we will receive if we are faithful and labor in kindness and love. Under the leadership of the best men and the best women that have lived upon the earth, Zion's sons and daughters are going forward, and if we will follow the advice and counsel that the Lord has given, our pathway will be one of happiness. It will be a pathway, perhaps not of ease and comfort always, but in the end it will terminate in the presence of our Heavenly Father, and glory, immortality and eternal lives will be our portion.

Is it worth the effort? Shall we close our eyes and in carelessness and indifference follow the crowd, or shall we hold to the iron rod, looking forward and upward, determined that we will earn the better part, and in the end receive the welcome of our Father, Well done, my good and faithful son, my good and faithful daughter; enter into your rest?

I am grateful for my membership in this Church and am thankful for all the blessings that are mine. I appreciate the brethren with whom I associate, and am thankful for you, my brethren and sisters, with whom I mingle in the Church, for your fine fellowship and for the wonderful kindness that you manifest as we minister among you.

SET HOMES IN ORDER

I pray that you may have wisdom to set your own homes in order today, not delaying. Set them in order while there is yet time. Call your families about you, and if you have failed in the past to give them an understanding of the purposes of life and a knowledge of the Gospel of our Lord, do it now, for I say to you as a servant of the Lord, they need it now and they will need it from now on.

I pray that the Lord will help us, that he will give us patience and love for our fellows, that we may be worthy of the high calling that has come to us as his servants, holding his Holy Priesthood, or as his daughters, blessed with knowledge such as women in the world do not possess. That we may be worthy of his continued favor and love one another, as he has commanded us to do, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.