

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

The time has come when I shall make a few remarks to this conference, and I trust that while I stand before you the Lord will bless me, for I need his blessing, and I hope that you who are here and that you who are listening in and you who are seeing our services will add your prayers to mine.

OBSERVANCE OF SABBATH

In the early days of the Church, indeed before the Church was organized, the Lord on more than one occasion told the Prophet and those working with him that they were to cry repentance to the people. At last he commanded them that when they preached they should preach not of tenets, but cry nothing but repentance unto this generation.

I assume that that imposes upon us who stand in responsible positions of leadership in the Church, the obligation to speak of things that involve the need of repentance, and I thought today, in the few moments that I shall stand before you that I would talk about the Sabbath.

I am going to read a good part of what I say from the revelations of the Lord, so that you will understand that the words I speak are not my words; they are the words of the Lord.

INSTRUCTIONS AT SINAI

At Sinai you will recall the Lord said:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Ex. 20:8-11.)

Before coming to the modern revelation, I should like to say that ancient Israel found that one of its most difficult commandments to observe was that of remembering the Sabbath day. After they were led into captivity, they were among a people who knew not the Sabbath which they knew, and very soon they began to partake, as we are partaking (and let me say it is amazing how we follow round the clock of earlier peoples in our wanderings, or beginning of wanderings from the early tenets as they were taught to us) of the sins of those among whom they lived. It came to be, as it is with us, that not alone was the matter one of laboring on the Sabbath, but it was also

one of recreation on the Sabbath. So rather trivial regulations (as they seem to us) were made by captive Israel in order to prevent ancient Israel from breaking the Sabbath.

TIME FOR RECREATION

Now on this question of recreation, which I may return to again if I have time, I should like to say that there is not much excuse for most of us now to resort to the Sabbath for recreation. Those who labor have a forty hour week, which means that they have Saturdays off. They have an eight-hour day, which gives them quite a lot of time either in the morning or in the evening, and there is no need whatsoever to resort to the Sabbath day for recreation. There is an abundance of recreation time during the week.

MODERN REVELATION ON SABBATH

On August 7, 1831, the Lord gave to the Prophet, then in Jackson County, Missouri, a revelation which included directions about observing the Sabbath. I am reading from Section 59.

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world," that is what the Lord said way back yonder,— "that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world,"—that is as true today as it was when the Lord spoke it, for our breaches of the Sabbath "spot" us with the transgression of the world—"thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day." I call your attention to the fact that this meeting in the house of prayer is the only assembly which the Lord authorizes on the Sabbath day. We are to go to the house of prayer and "offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day."

For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High; Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;

But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full. . . .

And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance—

Verily I say, that inasmuch as ye do this, the fulness of the earth is yours, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees and walketh upon the earth;

Yea, and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards. . . .

And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion.

And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments. . . .

But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.

I, the Lord, have spoken it, and the Spirit beareth record. Amen. (D. & C. 59:9-13, 15-17, 20-21, 23-24.)

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS

In November 1831, at Hiram, Ohio, in the great revelation dealing with many other things, the Lord referred to the Sabbath again. I am reading from Section 68:

And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

And the inhabitants of Zion also shall remember their labors, inasmuch as they are appointed to labor, in all faithfulness; for the idler shall be had in remembrance before the Lord.

Now, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness; they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness.

These things ought not to be, and must be done away from among them; wherefore, let my servant Oliver Cowdery carry these sayings unto the land of Zion.

And a commandment I give unto them—that he that observeth not his prayers before the Lord in the season thereof, let him be had in remembrance before the judge of my people.

These sayings are true and faithful; wherefore, transgress them not, neither take therefrom.

Behold, I am Alpha and Omega, and I come quickly. Amen. (D. & C. 68:29-35.)

In a revelation given to the Prophet on December 27, 1832, I am reading from Section 88, the Lord said:

And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.

Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God;

That your incomings may be in the name of the Lord; that your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord; that all your salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the Most High.

Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings. (D. & C. 88:118-121.)

On another occasion the Lord said to the Prophet, and I am reading from Section 90, given at Kirtland, Ohio, March 8, 1833:

And set in order the churches, and study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people. (D. & C. 90:15.)

And at Winter Quarters, President Brigham Young declared "The Word and Will of the Lord":

Let him that is ignorant learn wisdom by humbling himself and calling upon the Lord his God, that his eyes may be opened that he may see, and his ears opened that he may hear;

For my Spirit is sent forth into the world to enlighten the humble and contrite, and to the condemnation of the ungodly. (D. & C. 136: 32-33.)

I have read these commandments regarding what should be done and what might be done on the Sabbath, and I have noted that the Lord told them to build a house of prayer into which they should go to learn the things which I have read to you.

ACTIVITIES AT HOME AND ABROAD

Now, the ancient Israelites, as I have already told you, had a great many rules and regulations regarding what they might do on the Sabbath day. They found it necessary to draw distinctions between what they might do in their homes and what they might do when they were abroad.

This raised difficulties. So in order to give a little more scope to their home activities, they made a rule, a regulation, that if they were in a street that was a cul-de-sac (closed at one end), each household along the street would contribute a handful of meal, and out of this meal they would make a cake, and then they would hang up this cake at the end, the open end of the street, and thus all the street became part of the household of this whole group. If the street was open, they did the same thing by hanging a cake at each end of the street where they lived.

My reason for making that explanation is that I think there is a difference between what we may do in our homes and what we may go abroad to do.

The Lord has told us what we may do in the house of prayer, and what we may do in the house of prayer we may do, I take it, in our homes. We may seek learning. We may read good books. We may acquaint ourselves with languages, tongues, and people.

I call your attention again to the fact that the only places of gathering to which we are authorized to go, the only gatherings we are authorized to attend, are the meetings in the house of prayer. No other gathering is authorized on the Sabbath.

I think we may listen to good music in the home. I do not think we may go joy riding, nor to beach parties, nor on picnics! Nowadays, as this conference is witnessing throughout this valley and in adjacent areas, you may have what we may call movies right in your home. We shall have them tomorrow, Sunday. I think there is a great difference between looking at a good movie in your home and going to a movie house, a very great difference. But the home movies we look at should be of a kind that teach things specified in the revelations as in order in the house of prayer.

Some of you are using in your Sunday Schools visual aids which in fact are frequently only movies. But their character should be carefully guarded, and I am sure they will be, that nothing be shown that does not contribute to the learning we may get in the house of prayer, for in Sunday School you are in the house of prayer. You will then be gaining the knowledge which the Lord said should be gained in the house of prayer. But that gives you no license to go to commercial movies on Sunday, because we are not authorized to go to such gatherings. I think there is a sharp distinction in this matter.

HORSE RACING

Of course, I do not suppose there is any need of my even mentioning, though perhaps it might be well for me to mention, that horse racing on Sunday is not a proper place for a Latter-day Saint to be. They have a good deal of it, they tell me, in the southern part of the state. I have been in touch with some of the officers and know how difficult they think it is to handle. If you Latter-day Saints cannot stay away from horse racing and betting on Sunday, I am not sure how much the Lord is going to listen to your prayers about some other things that you very much desire. Of course, we may not gamble at any time or in any place.

Now, I am merely making some suggestions to you as to what I think are sharp lines of distinction. I think you may do anything in your home on Sunday or in the house of prayer on Sunday which the Lord has said you might do, and the words of the Lord in the revelations to which I have referred will tell you what you may do in the house of prayer.

BLESSINGS OF SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Now, may the Lord help us to observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, because, as I read to you at the very beginning, this commandment regarding the Sabbath was given, among other reasons, "that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world."

And then there follow along in that same revelation all the things which the Lord has given to us from the earth, and to me those things are recited by the Lord as showing what we are entitled to if we keep the Sabbath.

May the Lord help us keep the Sabbath I humbly pray, adding my testimony to those that have been borne regarding the truth of this great work, the divinity of the mission of Joseph Smith, the sonship of Jesus, that we have the restored gospel and the restored priesthood. That the Lord will bless us, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.:

The members of the Tabernacle Choir will sing as the closing song, "Behold A Host Arrayed in White."