

many are there amongst us that have advanced far enough to have gained this knowledge? We have had the Holy Ghost conferred upon us for many years. I was baptized and received the laying on of hands when eight years old. I have not made my election sure. I have not attained to that great desire as yet. Are we going to be satisfied and cease to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the moment we meet with adversity and trouble, lay down and cease our progression and advancement? I have seen new colonies of the Saints built up in some of our little settlements almost like magic. They reached a certain place with their improvements and like the Arkansas traveler became satisfied and made no further improvements. I am sometimes fearful that many of our people "climb their little hill" and then go down again. Young people get married, and oftentimes reach a place where all climbing, towering and reaching out after knowledge ceases and they merely eke out an existence. To see young men with such grand opportunities and prospects stop and wait for something to come to them is most deplorable. I ask you, to consider the changes, advancement and improvement your foreign missionary Elders undergo after a brief mission of two years. Their very being is changed, but note the frequency with which they cease progression and fall back to old habits, and become "mentally lazy."

The Lord is not well pleased with this evil, for it is found in our Priesthood quorums. The Lord made plain to His servant Oliver Cowdery, "Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought. But behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong."

The effects of idleness and mental laziness cause a stupor of thought and

will grieve the spirit of the Lord, and if persisted in will result in the withdrawal of the Spirit of the Lord. I am in favor of repenting of this evil and feel that we should dedicate a part at least of our time to attaining wisdom and in preparing ourselves for the great work that is before us.

I am in no wise alarmed that Christian ministers are coming among our people. I wish they would send 500 to visit among them. There is nothing better than opposition, to awaken and arouse us from our seeming security and lethargy. Every one should know that the Gospel is true and be able to vindicate his people. It amuses me to hear our Elders sometimes, almost boastingly, relate how they dumb-founded the Christian ministers. While this is true in many cases, it is also true that we do not always meet the learned, intelligent preachers of the world. These educated men treat our Elders indifferently and will not deign to meet them. They put me in mind of the Pharisees that wrapped their robes around them as they stood on the Temple steps for fear the Apostles' clothing might touch them. We will yet measure arms with the most learned and greatest men of the world, as our Seventies will find their way among the nations and peoples. As Paul stood before King Agrippa so will the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stand before kings and queens and the great men of the world. You can put that down, for it is true.

May the Lord bless and help you to remember these things and enable you to not take life too seriously, I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS.

The semi-annual conference for the year 1901, with this session, is drawing to its close. I have tried to recapitulate in my thought the great things that have been taught us; and I have come to this conclusion with reference to all our conferences, that while a great variety of instruction is imparted, it is generally the case that one doctrine will rise up in prominence above every other, according, I presume, as the development or circum-

stances of the Saints require that now this and now that, and then another doctrine should be impressed upon their minds.

I think when you return to your homes, the one thing which above all others you will carry with you from this conference will be the emphasis that has been placed upon the doctrine of reverence for the name of Deity. The time had come in the history of our people when it became absolutely necessary that their attention be called particularly to this commandment; for it is a commandment, as much in force today as it was when first given amidst the thunders that were heard from the summit of that lonely mountain in the wilderness — Mount Sinai) — namely, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy might, mind and strength;" and also, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in Vain; for God will not hold him guiltless who taketh His name in vain." That law, I say, is in force today, and yet there has grown up among us a carelessness with reference to this commandment. Blasphemy has become quite common among some of the youth of Zion and it is proper, therefore, that this evil should be corrected, even if it requires the whole attention of a great conference of the Church such as that which is now drawing to a close. The time is opportune for calling the attention of the youth to this subject. The junior classes of the Young Men's Improvement Associations will be taking up the study of the life of Christ during the winter; while the senior classes are about to begin a rather advanced course of study on the First Principles of the Gospel. Some five lessons of their manual are devoted to the subject of "God and the Godhead;" and since there will be such universal thought and study upon this great and fundamental doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ among members of the Church, it is eminently fitting that side by side with this study on the being and character of God, there should be taught also a reverence for His holy name; and that reproof where ever necessary be properly administered to those who do not respect the name of Deity.

It is not necessary, however, in the closing moments of this conference for me to attempt to add anything to what has already been said, and so well said, upon this important subject.

During the few moments that remain for us to be assembled I want to call your attention to one or two things closely related to this main topic of the conference. There is another commandment that might well be regarded almost as a continuation of this commandment calling for respect for the name of deity; and that is respect for Father and Mother. He who commanded man to honor God and reverence His name, also said, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord Thy God giveth thee." It was also the law of God in ancient Israel that when disrespect for father or for mother went so far as to lead the thoughtless or wicked son or daughter to curse father or mother, death was the penalty. (Exodus, xxi: 17). Of course, that would be regarded as a very extreme doctrine now; but extreme as you may think it, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself placed the seal of His approval upon it. You remember, perhaps, the circumstance of a number of the Pharisees coming to Jesus and complaining against His disciples because, forsooth, they ate with unwashed hands, and thus violated the "tradition of the Elders." A wonderful thing, was it not? But Jesus replied with a counter charge against them, which I will read to you: "But He answered and said unto them: Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" A more serious thing, I take it, than transgressing the "tradition of the Elders" by eating with unwashed hands. "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your traditions?" For God commanded saying: "Honor thy father and thy mother, and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death." But ye say: Whosoever shall say to his father or mother. It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites! Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying:

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

So that however harsh you may think the law of God as given to Moses upon this matter of requiring that there shall be honor for father and for mother among God's people, I answer your charge of harshness against the law of God with the statement that the Lord Jesus Christ approved of it, harsh as it may seem. And reproved sharply those who rendered of non-effect the commandment, by their tradition. Now all I desire to do on this occasion is to impress upon your minds the importance of this doctrine, of honoring father and mother, as well as of honoring the name of Deity. These are kindred commandments, and there is almost as much need to teach the youth of Israel respect for father and mother as there is to teach them reverence for the name of Deity.

There is still another commandment closely related to these two, viz.: respect for the Priesthood of God. In addition to respect for father and for mother, and respect for the name of God, there should also be respect for the Priesthood of God. And when I speak of respecting the Priesthood, I do not mean merely the President of the Church nor for the Apostles of the Church, nor the general authorities of the Church. I mean them of course; but I also mean all those who hold the Priesthood. I bespeak respect for the presidents of Stakes; for Bishops of wards; and also for the Priests, who teach the Gospel at the firesides of the people. I bespeak respect for the humblest of God's servants, as well as for the highest; for it is all one authority; it all comes from God. Priesthood is God's power delegated to man, and the humblest that holds that power has a claim upon the respect of both old and young in the midst of the Saints.

I sometimes think that the Priesthood is a little too common in our thought, not too plentiful, for there is work enough for all to do. But in thinking upon it we take into account too much the weaknesses of men, and do not honor sufficiently the Priesthood they hold, and by which they teach the children of men and administer the or-

dinances of the Gospel. Just one passage from the words of Jesus regarding this power and authority, that I may show you how respect for the Priesthood of God is really but a piece of the commandment that men shall honor God. We can trace the doctrine of honoring the Priesthood of God right back to the first commandment to which I refer, namely reverence for Deity Himself.

It is written here in the Scriptures, that when Jesus was sending out His disciples to evangelize the world, he said: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me." And the converse of the proposition is of course equally true; namely that he that rejecteth those whom God sends also rejects God.

It is written in this same chapter from which I am quoting that the people who reject the apostles, reject God; and they are commanded to bear witness of it in the most solemn manner, and the Lord promises His servants that it shall be more tolerable for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those who reject them.

When the humble teacher comes into your homes, Latter-day Saints, or when the Priest seeks opportunity to sit by your fireside and teach the peaceable things of the Kingdom to your children, and build up their faith in God, let me say they are God's messengers to your household, and ought to be received as coming from the Lord; and as being possessed—as indeed they are—with a portion of His authority; and it is just as binding upon us to receive these humble servants of God as it is to receive those who hold the highest authority in the Church. We make a mistake if we think we are fulfilling the law of God which commands that His servants shall be honored by honoring the more prominent officials in the church while we sneer at and laugh at and deride the efforts of the more humble servants of God who come among us to instruct us in the things of the Kingdom. Let this conference, then, O, Latter-day Saints, be remembered for teaching, first of all, reverence henceforth in Israel for the name

of Deity; and as collateral parts of that same doctrine—honor for parents; and profound respect for the priesthood of God.

The Lord bless you, Amen.

The choir and congregation sang:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

Benediction by Elder Joshua H. Paul.

AT THE TABERNACLE.

CLOSING SESSION.

Closing session, Sunday, 2 p. m.

President Lorenzo Snow was able to be present this afternoon, to the great gratification of the assemblage.

The choir and congregation sang:

"We thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet, To guide us in these latter days."

Prayer was offered by Elder Frank Y. Taylor.

The choir sang the anthem:

"The Mountain of the Lord's House."

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

Evidence of advancement—Responsibilities of stake and ward officers—They must not lay their duties upon the Twelve—Apostles to look after interests of the world—Selection of Second Counselor.

My dear brethren and sisters, it is rather a marvel to me that I venture to talk to you this afternoon; not but that I have something to say and would really like to have the time and the voice to say it, and perhaps by the exercise of your faith and prayers I may have the voice to address you for a few minutes. I have been delighted to hear of the spirit that has attended the speakers since this conference opened. It shows to me one glorious fact—that during the last six months the Latter-day Saints have not been idle. When the Elders address this conference and the Spirit is upon them more than it was at the preceding conference, it shows most clearly that there has been an advance on the part of the Latter-day Saints in the performance of their duties. The next conference we have, if the Saints will continue to improve as they have done during the last six months, our Elders will have more of the Spirit, and their addresses will be even more intelligent and more serviceable to you than they have been during this conference.

Brethren and sisters, God bless you. This is what I wanted to say to you. I have had a distressing cold the last eight or ten days, which has made me very hoarse, and I feared that I would not be able to appear at all during this conference.

I want to say a few words in reference to one particular subject, and I do not want what I shall say to be forgotten. It is a matter that concerns all the Saints; you are all interested in it, and especially the Presidents of Stakes, their counselors, the High Councilors, the Bishops and their counselors, and all those who have been appointed to hold certain portions of the Holy Priesthood and to be actively engaged in the various Stakes of Zion. There are now fifty Stakes of Zion and these Stakes are composed of several wards. On an average there are probably seven or eight wards to each Stake. Over each Stake there are a president and two counselors and twelve High Councilors. Then there are Bishops and counselors over the respective wards. And now, what responsibilities rest upon the officials of these fifty Stakes! The dominion of the Latter-day Saints, to a large extent, and the highest and most sacred responsibilities are depending upon these fifty presidents; and there is something to do for each of these authorities that I have mentioned. The most extensive and important responsibilities devolve upon these officials. And although, I doubt not, they have been pretty faithful in the past, they have not been so faithful in some respects, as they ought to have been; they have not realized their sacred responsibilities so much as they might have done.

This Church is now nearly seventy two years of age, and we are not expected to do the work of the days of our youth, but to do greater, larger and more extensive work. The Lord is coming one of these days, and He is interested in the work that you ought to be doing, and anxious to be doing. You ought to do all that you possibly can, and leave everything in your business affairs that you wisely can do and attend to these matters. The presidents of these fifty Stakes should