

SECOND DAY

MORNING MEETING

Conference reconvened Saturday morning, October 3, 1931, at 10 o'clock.

President Heber J. Grant presided.

The congregation sang the hymn "Though Deep'ning Trials."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder David R. Langlois, President of the Burley Stake.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Our mountain home so dear."

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

The words of the first hymn that we sang this morning are by Sister Eliza R. Snow, who at one time was President of the Relief Societies of the Church. The music was composed by Brother George Careless. The words of the hymn we have just sung are by Sister Emmeline B. Wells, one of the successors to Sister Snow in the presidency of the Relief Societies. The music to this hymn was composed by the late Evan Stephens.

Personally, I am very grateful for the wonderful inspiration of our brethren and sisters who have written the words and composed the music for so many of our inspired hymns.

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

There is reason for gratification in finding one's self a member of a goodly company. We can say, as yesterday many said in their hearts, and as it has been said aforetime, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

If we put into action the admonition of which we often sing—count our many blessings, one by one—we surely shall be surprised at what the Lord has done and is doing for us. Among the blessings for which we should be devoutly thankful is the privilege of thus assembling from time to time, in local or in general capacity, to be taught, especially to be reminded, for we have been taught personally through the many years and indirectly by recorded scriptures through the centuries; but we are apt to forget.

I note at these conferences a striking feature in the matter of the addresses that are given, in that each speaker leaves something that may serve as a rich text for those who follow him; and thus the instructions are cumulative, leading on step by step.

SANCTITY OF THE LORD'S NAME

The grand summation of the whole duty of man, as presented

by the President in his opening address, can not be too closely taken to heart—that we strive to keep the commandments of the Lord. Among those commandments one in my mind at this moment is that written amidst the awe-inspiring glory of Sinai: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

The word translated into our language as “vain” is an interesting one, and its usage is instructive. “In vain” is about the only phrase and marks, about the only occurrence in the English language in which the word “vain” is used as a noun. It is an adjective in common usage. It comes to us from a Latin root and meant, originally, empty and void, and as the lexicographers tell us, that meaning has been maintained through all its variations.

To take the name of God in vain, therefore, is to use that name lightly, to use it emptily, to use it without effect, so far as the intent is concerned—but nevertheless, with awful effect upon the profane user. We are apt to think that this has reference to the speaking of the name of God only, and in that particular respect the commandment is sufficiently weighty and important to us. Profanity is all too common in the world—profanity of speech.

PROFANITY IN SPEECH

But beyond this there is profanity of action, which is of greater import than the spoken word, even as the prayer of the heart is greater than the prayer of the lips. Profanity in this sense is any manifestation of disrespect or irreverence for the name of God; blasphemy consists in attributing to Deity any unworthy act or motive, or in claiming for one's self the distinguishing attributes of Deity.

I listen with horror to profane swearing. One can not escape it wholly, go where one will; that is to say, as one has to meet diverse associations one is sure to encounter it. Of profanity I have not yet heard one word of defense. It is wholly demoralizing, wholly base, to say nothing of the sacrilege and blasphemy oftentimes associated in the linking of the name of Deity with our perverse expressions.

I call to mind that Chapin has given us a thought in regard to the use of profanity. “Profaneness,” he wrote, “is a brutal vice. He who indulges in it is no gentleman. I care not what his stamp may be in society, or what clothes he wears, or what culture he boasts. Despite all his refinement, the light and habitual taking of God's name in vain betrays a coarse and brutal will.”

And yet another has said: “Profanity never did any man the least good. No man is the richer or happier or wiser for it. It commends no one to society. It is disgusting to the refined, abominable to the good, insulting to those with whom we associate, degrading to the mind, unprofitable, needless and injurious to society.”

Perhaps some of you may think my remarks are inept in this particular presence. I do not believe that the habitual taking of the

name of God in vain by profane speech is a prevalent vice among the Latter-day Saints. I refer to this in passing, only, as one way in which the name of God is all too frequently polluted among men in general. But there is much beyond and behind that. Profanity of the lips, I repeat, is not the only form in which this offense appears.

ENORMITY OF FALSE SWEARING

The name of God is a means of power. He is jealous—that is to say, righteously zealous of his name, because of that for which his name stands. “And ye shall not swear by my name falsely,” he spoke through his prophet of old, as is written in the book of the law, “Neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God. I am the Lord.” (Lev. 19:12.)

But, one may say, those commandments were given in the days when the law, as distinguished from the Gospel, was dominant. Very true. The people then had to be led by the code of “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not,” until under the tutelage of the law, as under the direction of a schoolmaster, they were brought, once erring children, to a state of preparation for the reception of the Gospel.

But the principle involved is an eternal one. The name of God is and will ever be honored in the heavens beyond, as it is required that we honor it here upon the earth, and he honors his own name and rightly demands that we honor it also.

But another phase of taking the name of God in vain is that referred to in the scripture just cited: “And ye shall not swear by my name falsely.” How that is disregarded in the world we know. In the courts of the land, yes, I will say, with reservation, in the courts of justice, the oath is administered, “So help you God,” and we witness every day practically, instances of such solemn adjuration being disregarded as soon as spoken; we see men perjuring themselves, defiling, polluting the name of God even on the witness stand. We have come to think that perjury in our courts is something to be condoned, palliated, and in some minds extolled, if by it some personal advantage can be gained.

USING THE HOLY NAME PRESUMPTUOUSLY

I ask your attention to another way by which the name of God is taken in vain, and that by the presumption of men who profess to speak in his name without authority. The Lord has been particularly careful as to those whom he commissions to use his name, may I say, officially, and having thus commissioned a man, or any being, man or angel, to speak in his name, he, the Lord, holds himself bound by what is done by that agent if it is done righteously in his holy name.

I pray you call to mind that striking instance of the Lord’s word to Israel as the hosts were journeying through the wilderness of old. He told them what he had done for them and what he would continue to do for them, and appointed one to represent him, and said unto Israel:

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

"Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." (Exo. 23:20, 21.)

Having thus placed his name in men for the accomplishment of his purposes, he has uttered words of warning time and again lest it be defiled.

"For I will not suffer my name to be polluted, and I will not give my glory unto another." (I Nephi 20:11.)

In the days of the Gospel restoration in the meridian of time the word of the Lord was given unto the people to regard the sanctity of the name of God. Did not the Christ teach in that prayer of prayers that we should address our Father with the words of praise, "Hallowed be thy name," as of old he had declared through the Psalmist, "Holy and reverend is his name?" Unto those who had undertaken to falsely assume to speak in the name of God the Lord has uttered warnings in ancient times as in this age and dispensation. Consider these words, given by the Lord through his prophet, in August, 1831:

"Behold, I am Alpha and Omega, even Jesus Christ.

"Wherefore, let all men beware how they take my name in their lips—

"For behold, verily I say, that many there be who are under this condemnation, who use the name of the Lord, and use it in vain, having not authority.

"Wherefore, let the Church repent of their sins, and I, the Lord, will own them; otherwise they shall be cut off.

"Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit; and in this there is no condemnation, and ye receive the Spirit through prayer; wherefore, without this there remaineth condemnation." (D. and C. 63:60-64.)

Yet in this day there are men who rise up and avow as in the name of the Lord that they have received his word, and actually presume to declare it unto the people as the word of God given by authority. But in the next section, sixty-four, as we have it recorded, the Lord again spoke:

"For it shall come to pass that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion.

"And liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known." (D. and C. 64:38, 39.)

WE BEAR THE LORD'S NAME

And now there is yet another instance, method, way by which we are too prone to take the name of God in vain and in this connection I call your attention to the thirtieth chapter of Proverbs, verses seven to nine inclusive, and ask you to heed these words, the words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, speaking from the fulness of his heart:

"Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:

"Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

"Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

What association is there between the crime of theft and that of

taking the name of God in vain, so closely brought together here? Lest I steal, and thereby take the name of God in vain—making it a double crime. Do we take the name of God in vain by stealing? Latter-day Saints, this applies to us. Is not the name of the Lord written in our foreheads? Where can a Latter-day Saint go without bearing the name of the Lord with him? And if he steal, he is stealing before the Lord, and with his name displayed, thus polluting the name of the Lord, for he has taken that name upon himself.

By way of summary:

1. We may take the name of God in vain by profane speech.
2. We take it in vain when we swear falsely, not being true to our oaths and promises.
3. We take it in vain in a blasphemous sense when we presume to speak in that name without authority.
4. And we take his name in vain whenever we wilfully do aught that is in defiance of his commandments, since we have taken his name upon ourselves.

Can we pray that prayer of Agur, the son of Jakeh: "Give me neither poverty nor riches"? The first part of it I think we can. None of us welcome poverty. But can we pray the prayer? We can say it, but that may not be praying. Lord, give me neither poverty nor riches beyond my power to bear. Do not send poverty that may lead me to steal. I fear I can not bear it. Lord, send me not riches that may make me full of conceit so that I spurn thee and say, Who is the Lord? But feed me with food suited to my condition that I may develop and be thy son in very deed.

Latter-day Saints let us remember the word of God, we must not take the name of the Lord our God in vain, for surely he will not hold us guiltless if we take his name in vain.

That we may speak and act, live and serve in his name, I fervently pray. Amen.

ELDER ARTHUR WELLING

President of the North Central States Mission

My brethren and sisters, I am proud to be a missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and am very pleased to be able to report for the North Central States mission that all of our missionaries are well and busy and happy in their work.

When Jesus was asked by Pilate whether he were king of the Jews a part of his answer was:

"For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

We like to feel, in a modest, humble way, like that—that for this cause came we into the world, that we might testify of the truth that God, our Father in heaven, lives; that Jesus, our elder brother, gloriously resurrected, lives; that these two heavenly beings have condescended to again appear in these last days to our Prophet, and have taught