

thanks to our Creator for revealing unto His prophet what we call the Word of Wisdom. It sets forth in language spoken 153 years ago principles now confirmed and taught by modern dietary science. With all of this is given a divinely spoken promise, the like of which is found nowhere else:

"And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:18-21).

What a marvelous, remarkable, and unique statement of religious principle that is. It is a part of our doctrine given by an all-wise Father, our Creator, for our physical and temporal good.

I am not saying that disease will not come, that death will not strike. Death is a part of the divine plan, a necessary step in the eternal life of the sons and daughters of God. But I do not hesitate to say that in this brief but inclusive statement of the Lord is found counsel, given with a promise, which,

if more widely observed, would save untold pain and suffering and lead not only to increased physical well-being but also to great and satisfying "treasures of knowledge" of the things of God.

God be thanked

All of this of which I have spoken comes of the revealed word of the Almighty to bless His children. We invite you, wherever you may be or whatever your circumstances, to come and partake.

God be thanked for this glorious work, for this day of restored truth and light, for the gospel of Jesus Christ. I bear witness of its divinity as I express unto you, my brethren and sisters, my love for each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Our Savior's Love" without announcement.

President Benson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Our Savior's Love."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

"Great pollutions upon the face of the earth"

Recently our family was viewing what was supposed to be a wholesome movie on videotape. Suddenly, one of the actors used a vulgar expression. Embarrassed, we began to smooth this over for our ten-year-old daughter. She quickly assured us that we needn't worry because she heard worse than

that every day from the boys and girls at her school.

I am sure most LDS parents have had similar experiences. The nature and extent of profanity and vulgarity in our society is a measure of its deterioration.

I cannot remember when I first heard profane and vulgar expressions in common use around me. I suppose it was from adults in the barnyard or the

barracks. Today, our young people hear such expressions from boys and girls in their grade schools, from actors on stage and in the movies, from popular novels, and even from public officials and sports heroes. Television and videotapes bring profanity and vulgarity into our homes.

For many in our day, the profane has become commonplace and the vulgar has become acceptable. Surely this is one fulfillment of the Book of Mormon prophecy that in the last days "there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth" (Mormon 8:31).

Commandments against profanity

The people of God have always been commanded to abstain from language that is profane or vulgar. Latter-day Saints should understand why.

The names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are sacred. The prophet Isaiah taught that the Lord will not suffer these names to be dishonored—"polluted" as the scriptures say. (See 1 Nephi 20:11; Isaiah 48:11.)

In the third of the Ten Commandments, the Lord commanded ancient Israel: "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" (Exodus 20:7). This same commandment was repeated to the Book of Mormon people by the prophet Abinadi (see Mosiah 13:15) and to each of us through modern prophets (see D&C 136:21).

Using names of Father and Son without authority

The Doctrine and Covenants gives this example:

"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" (D&C 63:61-62).

This scripture shows that we take the name of the Lord in vain when we use his name without authority. This obviously occurs when the sacred names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are used in what is called profanity: in hateful cursings, in angry denunciations, or as marks of punctuation in common discourse.

Take upon us the name of Christ

The names of the Father and the Son are used with authority when we reverently teach and testify of them, when we pray, and when we perform the sacred ordinances of the priesthood.

There are no more sacred or significant words in all of our language than the names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

As we read in the Book of Mormon, after the Savior appeared to the people on this continent he taught them that they must take upon them the name of Christ:

"For by this name shall ye be called at the last day;

"And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day" (3 Nephi 27:5-6).

Pray unto the Father

He has instructed his followers to call the Church in his name. (See 3 Nephi 27:7-8; D&C 115:4.) In our time this is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Savior taught that we should begin our prayers by saying, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (3 Nephi 13:9; see also Luke 11:2). In the Book of Mormon, the risen Lord gave these further instructions:

"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.

“Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed” (3 Nephi 18:19–21; see also 3 Nephi 27:7; John 14:13; 15:16).

The scriptures are replete with declarations that the name of Jesus Christ is “the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men” (Moses 6:52; see also Acts 4:12; 2 Nephi 25:20; 31:21; Mosiah 3:17).

Sacred names of Elohim and Jehovah

The Bible has hundreds of references to the name of God, a sacred word which usually refers to God the Father, or Elohim. (See Genesis; John 3:16.) The ancient prophets also knew and revered the name of Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, Jesus Christ, whom the Bible usually refers to as the Lord (see JST Exodus 6:3; Abraham 1:16, 2:8; Ether 3:1–28; Isaiah 43:3.)

These names were so sacred that the children of Israel were repeatedly commanded not to profane the holy name of their God. (See Leviticus 18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6.) One who blasphemed the name of the Lord was commanded to be put to death by stoning. (See Leviticus 24:16.)

Cataloging the sins of his countrymen, the prophet Ezekiel said, “Her priests have . . . profaned mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and the profane . . . and I am profaned among them” (Ezekiel 22:26; see also 36:20–23).

Throughout the ages, the Lord has directed that “whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name” (3 Nephi 27:7). God the Father commanded that Adam and Eve and all of their descendants should be baptized “in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ” (Moses 6:52).

Signs that follow the believer

At the conclusion of his ministry, the risen Lord identified signs that would follow those who believed (see Mark 16:17–18):

“In my name they shall do many wonderful works;

“In my name they shall cast out devils;

“In my name they shall heal the sick;

“In my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf” (D&C 84:66–69).

When Peter healed the lame beggar, he spoke these words: “Such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6).

When the names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are used with reverence and authority, they invoke a power beyond what mortal man can comprehend.

It should be obvious to every believer that these mighty names—by which miracles are wrought, by which the world was formed, through which man was created, and by which we can be saved—are holy and must be treated with the utmost reverence. As we read in modern revelation, “Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64).

Melchizedek Priesthood

So it is that the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God is called the Melchizedek Priesthood “out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name” (D&C 107:3–4).

The desire and work of Satan is to mislead and corrupt. He seeks to frustrate the gospel plan by which God has provided the opportunity of eternal life for His children.

Satan seeks to discredit the sacred names of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, the names through which their work is done. He succeeds in a measure whenever he is able to influence any man or woman, boy or girl, to make holy names common and to associate them with coarse thoughts and evil acts. Those who use sacred names in vain are, by that act, promoters of Satan's purposes.

Profanity profoundly offensive

Profanity is profoundly offensive to those who worship the God whose name is desecrated. We all remember how a prophet reacted from a hospital bed when an operating room attendant stumbled and cursed in his presence. Even half-conscious, Elder [Spencer W.] Kimball "recoiled and implored: 'Please! Please! That is my Lord whose names you revile'" (*Improvement Era*, May 1953, p. 320).

The words we speak are important. The Savior taught that men will be held to account for "every idle word" in the day of judgment. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). He also said, "That which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matthew 15:11).

Truly, as the Apostle James taught, "The tongue is a fire, . . . an unruly evil" that can defile the whole body (James 3:6, 8).

Relinquish companionship of Spirit

Profanity also takes its toll on the one who uses it. As we read in Proverbs, "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4.) The Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, testifies of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. (See 2 Nephi 31:18.) When those names are dishonored, that Spirit, which "doth not dwell in unholy temples" (Helaman 4:24), is offended

and withdraws. For this reason, those who profane the name of God inevitably relinquish the companionship of his Spirit.

As the Apostle Paul taught Timothy, in order to be "approved unto God," we must "shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness" (2 Timothy 2:15-16). Profanity leads to more ungodliness because the Spirit of the Lord withdraws and the profane are left without guidance.

Vulgarity pollutes

Vulgar and crude expressions are also offensive to the Spirit of the Lord.

The Apostle James taught that followers of Christ should be "slow to speak, slow to wrath," and should "lay apart all filthiness" (James 1:19, 21). In the Bible, filthiness is a term associated with sexual sin and with lewd language. (See Ezekiel 16:36; 24:13; Ephesians 5:3-4.) Thus, Paul was surely condemning vulgarity when he wrote the Colossians, "Also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:8).

These biblical condemnations of vulgarity are needed in our day.

Indecent and vulgar expressions pollute the air around us. Relations that are sacred between husband and wife are branded with coarse expressions that degrade what is intimate in marriage and make commonplace what is forbidden outside it. Moral sins that should be unspeakable are in the common vernacular. Human conduct plunging downward from the merely immodest to the utterly revolting is written on the walls and shouted in the streets. Twentieth-century men and women of sensitivity can easily understand how Lot, a fugitive from the actions and speech of Sodom and Gomorrah, could have been "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7).

No artificial boosters

How soberly we must regard the Book of Mormon teachings that "there cannot any unclean thing enter into the kingdom of God; wherefore there must needs be a place of filthiness prepared for that which is filthy" (1 Nephi 15:34; see also Alma 7:21).

Profane and vulgar expressions are public evidence of a speaker's ignorance, inadequacy, or immaturity.

A speaker who profanes must be ignorant or indifferent to God's stern command that his name must be treated with reverence and not used in vain.

A speaker who mouths profanity or vulgarity to punctuate or emphasize speech confesses inadequacy in his or her own language skills. Properly used, modern languages require no such artificial boosters.

A speaker who employs profanity or vulgarity to catch someone's attention with shock effect engages in a babyish device that is inexcusable as juvenile or adult behavior. Such language is morally bankrupt. It is also progressively self-defeating, since shock diminishes with familiarity and the user can only maintain its effect by escalating its excess.

"Our words will condemn us"

Members of the Church, young or old, should never allow profane or vulgar words to pass their lips. The language we use projects the images of our hearts, and our hearts should be pure. As the Savior taught:

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34-35).

The Book of Mormon teaches us that when we are brought before the judgment bar of God "our words will condemn us . . . and our thoughts will also condemn us" (Alma 12:14). Let us

recognize profanity and vulgarity for what they are. They are sins that separate us from God and cripple our spiritual defenses by causing the Holy Ghost to withdraw from us.

We should abstain and we should teach our children to abstain from all such expressions.

Encourage others to abstain from profanity

We can also encourage our associates to do likewise. Where we have the courage to make a friendly request, like Elder Kimball, we will often receive a respectful and cooperative reply. Our married daughter who lives in Illinois had such an experience. As she took her turn car pooling the twelve-year-olds home from the soccer game, her noisy passengers filled the air with profanity. Firmly, but with good humor, she told the boys, "In our family we only use that name when we worship, so we ask you, please don't say that name disrespectfully in our car." The boys immediately complied, and, what is even more surprising, most of them still remembered the next time it was her turn to drive.

We obviously cannot control all that goes on in our presence. Modern revelation suggests one alternative for those who would be clean: "Go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves" (D&C 38:42). Sometimes we can remove ourselves from language that is profane or vulgar. If this is not possible, we can at least register an objection so that others cannot conclude that our silence means approval or acquiescence.

Our thirteenth article of faith commits us to seek after things that are "virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy." The language of Latter-day Saints should be reverent and clean. We understand the eternal requirement of cleanliness, and we understand the sacred significance of the names of the Father and the Son.

I testify of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, and pray that we may be more faithful in honoring their holy names. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just heard from Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Praise to the Man," following which we shall hear from Elder Jack H. Goaslind, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

Elder Jack H. Goaslind

Happiness—source is within

Last summer I saw an interesting picture as I followed a car on the freeway. It was a large station wagon that had obviously endured many road skirmishes. The top rack was loaded with luggage; the seats were loaded with people. Four bare feet hung out the rear window, and elbows and arms hung out the side windows. In the front seat, the mother was wrestling with a feisty child while simultaneously trying to calm an upset infant. The father was desperately trying to negotiate the heavy traffic. It was obviously vacation time for this family. As I surveyed the situation with some degree of empathy, I noticed a bumper sticker which read, "Are we having fun yet?"

I laugh about this scene whenever I recall it. I believe it is amusing because it exhibits a wry insight into human nature. It reveals a very real aspect of the human condition: the largely unfulfilled pursuit of happiness. The implications of the question "Are we having fun yet?" are profound. How many people in this world pursue happiness but find that it eludes them? They contrive pleasures, invent amusements, and invest heavily in recreation. They go abroad in search of this rare gift but fail to see that evidence of it is all around them; the source is within them.

"Men are, that they might have joy"

As I have occasion to be with wonderful people throughout the world, I am often moved by the many individuals I meet who are looking for happiness, but not quite finding it. They yearn and strive and endure, but seem to be asking, "Am I happy yet?" I desire to assure you that happiness is real. It can be experienced here, and we can know a fulness of joy in the hereafter. May I share with you some insights about the kind of happiness promised by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lehi's words to his son Jacob include a profound truth: "All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

"Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:24-25).

The "plan of happiness"

Our wise and loving Father in Heaven is concerned for the welfare of his children. He desires to see us happy. The very purpose of our lives can be defined in terms of happiness. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (*History of the Church*, 5:134).