

God of bringing to the earth again the plan of life and salvation, and that all the men who in the providences of the Lord have been called to stand at the head of this Church were in very deed called of God, and the servants of God in laboring for truth here upon the earth.

May God help you and me and every soul that has a knowledge that he lives, that Jesus is our Redeemer, that Joseph Smith was the instrument of Almighty God in restoring again the Gospel, so to live it and so to keep his commandments that our lives will proclaim it, and I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

At President Grant's request the audience arose and sang one verse of "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning."

ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I attended a stake conference a number of years ago and spoke on the Word of Wisdom. At the close of the conference a good sister came up somewhat excited and said: "Brother Smith, you never said a word about backbiters and fault-finders, and I think it is far worse to bear false witness and to backbite than it is to drink a cup of tea."

I said: "I think I can say things just as emphatic perhaps about backbiters as I can about people who break the Word of Wisdom, but I did not have that for a subject this afternoon."

When I went to the rear of the building nearly everybody had left, but a man held out his hand and said:

"Brother Smith, that is the first discourse on the Word of Wisdom that I ever liked."

I said: "Haven't you heard other discourses on the Word of Wisdom?"

He said: "Yes, but this is the first one that I ever enjoyed."

I said: "How is that?"

He said: "Well, you see, I am keeping the Word of Wisdom now."

I will not be offended, nor will I cease to rejoice whenever President Grant feels to speak on the Word of Wisdom.

SCRIPTURAL PROMISES TO OBEDIENT

I want to read to you a few verses from a very important revelation given to the Church in 1831. This was given to those who had assembled in Zion, meaning of course Jackson County, Missouri. The Lord said unto them:

Behold, blessed, saith the Lord, are they who have come up unto this land with an eye single to my glory, according to my commandments.

For those that live shall inherit the earth, and those that die shall rest from all their labors, and their works shall follow them; and they shall

receive a crown in the mansions of my Father, which I have prepared for them.

Yea, blessed are they whose feet stand upon the land of Zion, who have obeyed my gospel; for they shall receive for their reward the good things of the earth, and it shall bring forth in its strength.

And they shall also be crowned with blessings from above, yea, and with commandments not a few, and with revelations in their time—they that are faithful and diligent before me.

Wherefore I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it.

Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things.

Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt 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.

I have read quite a large portion of this revelation. I think it is very important. The Lord here promises those people who gathered in Zion—and I think the promise is just as good for us today—that if they would keep his commandments, he would pour out upon them the blessings of heaven and the blessings of the earth.

BLESSINGS FORFEITED

The world has been in distress. Why? Because of selfishness, greed, and unrighteousness, because they have forsaken the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ. We would have good crops and abundant crops if we would serve the Lord. We would not be in distress financially and in our substance, if we would hearken unto these commandments, because we have the word of the Lord for it. He has made the promise. We have failed to heed the instruction.

Moreover he says in this revelation that he would give unto us commandments not a few. I am not afraid of the commandments of the Lord. And he says that he would give us revelations in their time. I am not afraid of the revelations from him. I sometimes tremble about revelations from men, and commandments coming from men, but not from the Lord. And yet the Lord is holding back from us revelations and commandments pertaining to our welfare and salvation because we will not hearken unto that which has already been given.

WHEREIN WE HAVE FAILED

The President of the Church stood where I am standing now and pleaded with the people more than once to uphold and sustain the law

of God in regard to the Word of Wisdom, and protect the people who needed the protection, and we ignored his counsel. That was not pleasing in the sight of our Father in heaven, and some of us need to repent, we need to turn unto the Lord and serve him more faithfully in many ways. We are not keeping his commandments as we ought to do. I have in mind what I just read in regard to the Sabbath day. We are commanded to do certain things and none other upon this day, and we do not do those things, and we do things that we are commanded to abstain from doing.

A week or two ago I attended a conference in the Grant stake tabernacle, it was the Cottonwood stake conference. In going down Ninth South to get to that meeting place, it was all I could do to pass down the street in an automobile in front of a certain park which had been dedicated as a playground, because of the people who were assembled there. I do not know how many. Farther on others were assembled, engaged in sports on the Sabbath day. I took it for granted, and I believe I am right, that many of those people were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

PLEA FOR SABBATH OBSERVANCE

I plead with you, my brethren and sisters, to observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy. This is one of the great Ten Commandments the Lord has given, and do not get the idea that this commandment was a part of the law of Moses which was done away in Christ. The Decalogue was older than Moses, it continued after Moses passed away. The Lord has reiterated these commandments, he has renewed them and commanded us in our day to observe them and keep them sacredly and holy, and therefore I plead with you.

We ought not to be playing baseball on the Sabbath day. We ought not to be going to the resorts, we ought to keep away from these picture houses on the Sabbath day. It was my privilege some years ago to go through the East Central States Mission. In the city of Goldsborough, on the Sabbath day, we were granted the use of the leading show house, the best one in the city, in which to hold our meetings, three of them, morning, afternoon and night, without any charge. It was free for us to hold religious services and closed against the amusements which were in that house all other days of the week. The people were quiet, there were no great gatherings on the streets, in the parks, or shouting at baseball games or other sports. The people were quietly engaged in prayer and going to their churches. I thought, Why can't we have that among our own people in the West? I felt somewhat ashamed. We cannot do anything, it seems, today in the way of sports, unless we have to include such sports on the Sabbath day. When we want to engage in skiing, to find men to enter the Olympics, it appears that we have to do it on the Sabbath day. When we dedicate a park or playground in this city, we think we have to do it on the Sabbath day. Our hunting and fishing season must begin on the Sabbath day.

A PROPER OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH

These things are displeasing in the sight of God, and I speak not merely for the Latter-day Saints, but for all good Christian people. If they believe in the words of Christ, in the words of the scripture, then they ought to sanction what I am saying, and when we turn from the commandments the Lord has given unto us for our guidance then we do not have a claim upon his blessings.

President Joseph F. Smith said :

To observe the Sabbath day properly is the plain duty of every Latter-day Saint—and that includes the young men and young women and the boys and girls. It may seem strange that it should be necessary to repeat this often-asserted fact. But there appear to be some people, and sometimes whole communities, who neglect this duty, and therefore stand in need of his admonition.

What are we required to do on the Sabbath Day? The revelations of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith are very plain on this subject, and these should govern us, for they are in strict harmony with the teachings of the Savior. Here are some of the simple requirements :

The Sabbath is appointed unto you to rest from your labors.

The Sabbath is a special day for you to worship, to pray, and to show zeal and ardor in your religious faith and duty—to pay devotions to the Most High.

The Sabbath day is a day when you are required to offer your time and attention in worship of the Lord, whether in meeting, in the home, or wherever you may be—that is the thought that should occupy your mind. * * *

The Lord is not pleased with people who know these things and do them not. * * *

Men are not showing zeal and ardor in their religious faith and duty when they hustle off early on Sunday morning in cars, in teams, in automobiles, to the canyons, the resorts, and to visit friends or places of amusement, with their wives and children. They are not paying their devotions in this way to the Most High.

There is a good deal more of this that I could read if there were time. We know our duty; we know what the Lord expects of us. How can we expect his blessing and to be in harmony and fellowship with him if we ignore his commandments which are given for our guidance and for our temporal as well as for our spiritual salvation?

NEED FOR REPENTANCE

Brethren and sisters, let us observe the Word of Wisdom, let us observe the Fast day, and fast and pay into the Church in offerings what would be equal to what we would consume if we should eat. Let us pray to the Father on our knees. We are not praying enough. We are not giving the attention to the commandments that we ought to give. We need repentance, and I plead with you, let us go forth in the spirit of humiliation and with the contrite spirit and the broken heart of which the Lord speaks in this revelation. I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.