

Sunday, April 4, 1965

First Day

ments" which I think have modern day application:

Thou shalt love thy children with all thy heart and hesitate not to manifest interest in and affection for them. This is the first and great commandment.

Second, thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images of thy business, thy career, or thy sports, or any likeness of pleasure, occupation, or pursuit in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them so that thou forgettest to be a pal and a chum to thy children.

Third, thou shalt not take the name of "Dad" upon thee lightly, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who has little regard for the responsibility of fatherhood.

Fourth, remember thy children's portion of thy time and keep it holy. Many days shalt thou labor and do all manner of work that thou mayest provide suitably for all their needs, but in that portion of thy day which belongeth to them, thou shalt not do any work, neither shalt thou bury thy nose in a book, betake thyself to the golf links, or busy thyself otherwise according to thine own pleasure.

Fifth, honor thy wife, for thy children loveth her dearly and cannot admire, respect, and love thee if thou display not loving kindness for her.

Sixth, thou shalt counsel and advise with thy children in all things and share with them the secrets of thy heart.

Seventh, thou shalt be firm in thy discipline lest thy children stray from the paths of righteousness for the lack of thy guiding hand. But thou shalt not even hold the reins of thine authority too tight nor fail to understand that thy children desireth and needeth more and more of that independence of action which becometh a man.

Eighth, thou shalt have trust and confidence in thy children and be patient and long-suffering with all their shortcomings.

Ninth, thou shalt walk uprightly before men and make thy ways clean in the sight of thy God, for thy children doth follow after thy example. Moreover, take heed that thy children hath more discernment than thou sometimes thinkest and art more influenced by what they see thou really art than by what thou pretendest to be.

And tenth, thou shalt not forget thou wert once a boy. Neither shalt thou be unmindful that times have changed very much since the days of thy youth.

I am grateful, my brothers and sisters and friends, for knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for its meaning in our home, and for this divine program which has been established to influence lives everywhere. May we be equal to the tasks as dads and husbands, as priesthood bearers, to raise up a generation that will bless this nation and this world, I humbly pray as I testify to the divinity of these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Jesus of Nazareth was rejected by his people. Sensing it keenly, he said one day:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

"Behold your house is left unto you desolate. . . ." (Luke 13:34-35.)

Tendency of Mankind to Drift

From the beginning of time it has been the tendency of mankind to drift away from the Lord and to love darkness rather than light.

It began when Satan came among the children of Adam and Eve and tempted them and destroyed their faith. The result was that many ". . . loved Satan more than God." The scripture explains that ". . . men began from that

time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish." (Moses 5:13.)

This departure from the ways of the Lord was an apostasy, and since that time apostasy has existed among us almost continuously. While groping for the truth, men have made their own religions, established their own moral codes, and have justified themselves in following them.

It was so likewise in the days of the Savior. He fought against the man-made doctrines of his contemporaries and said that to use them in worship was of no value, for they could save no one. He vigorously denounced the sensual living so characteristic of that day. As a result, murderous schemes entered the hearts of his enemies, and they sought his life and eventually did crucify him, so completely did they hate the things of God, although professing to serve him in their own self-invented manner.

It was not long before apostasy developed within the Christian group itself. It occurred in various ways: partly in doctrine and ritual and much in the daily habits of the people.

Characteristics of Apostasy

The Apostle Paul said that this apostasy was characterized by mankind becoming ". . . lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

"Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

"Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: . . ." (2 Tim. 3:2-5.)

Usually when people speak of an apostasy from the truth they refer to changes in doctrines or a repudiation of certain beliefs. There has been an abundance of this. Such changes have resulted in the organization of hundreds of churches with different creeds, rituals, and ordinances, many of them being highly contradictory.

But personal sin is as real an apostasy as any effort to change the law or break the everlasting covenant.

Consider Paul's words again: covetous, proud, blasphemers, false accusers, incontinent, without natural affection, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

In other words, personal sin is as much an apostasy from Christ as an acceptance of false doctrines and man-made rituals.

But it is even worse when clergymen, pretending to represent the Christ, compound their apostasy by actually leading people into serious personal sin, at the same time asking them to practise creeds of their own invention which have no power to save.

Iniquity Challenges Christ's Doctrines

The Atlantic edition of *Time* magazine, March 5, 1965, reported in its religious section that "the 20th Century's sexual revolution directly challenges Christianity's basic doctrines against immorality." The magazine then goes on to say: "Some progressive church thinkers now advocate a 'new morality' to take account of these facts of life. What they propose is an ethic based on love rather than law, in which the ultimate criterion for right and wrong is not divine command but the individual's subjective perception of what is good for himself. . . ." (P. 42.)

The article referred to 900 clergymen and students of religion recently gathered at Harvard University's Divinity School to ponder this so-called new morality. Many among those clergymen expressed the thought that this new moral concept which fosters licentious free love is what they call a "healthy advance" (p. 44) which now will relieve them of the responsibility of living the strict moral teachings of Christ.

Disaster in the Wake of Attempt to Reverse Divine Law

An Episcopal minister, the Reverend Frederick C. Wood, speaking at Goucher College, Baltimore, told a group of young students, and I quote, that "sex is fun—premarital sex is beautiful—we all ought to relax and stop feeling guilty about our sexual activities, thoughts

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and desires." He was thus quoted by the Associated Press and newspapers which I myself read. These newspapers published his picture with the article on his attempt to reverse the divine law.

There are moves in at least two states in America to ease up on laws regulating immoral behavior. Legislators are being asked to rule that adultery should no longer be considered a crime, that homosexuals and other deviates should be allowed to practise their depravities legally and without restriction, and that the age of consent for a child to enter public prostitution should be lowered to sixteen years.

This is not only true in America. Similar conditions are found elsewhere, with some clergymen and high government officials alike condoning and in some cases encouraging licentious practices.

This is one of the great evidences of the apostasy of mankind from the teachings of Christ.

To reject or try to change the moral law of God is to reject God. To leave the path of virtue as set forth by Christ is an apostasy from Christ. If any segment of Christianity attempts to change the moral law of God, it will attack one of the most basic precepts of heaven and will thereby place itself in the role of anti-Christ.

I ask you: Is God, who the scriptures say is the same yesterday, today, and forever (see Heb. 13:8), now changing his mind? Does Jesus no longer believe what he taught when he was on earth? He said that anyone who looks upon a woman with lust in mind commits adultery in his heart. Note that he says that if we merely look upon another with lust, it is immoral.

Then what does he say about the completion of that act?

Does he call it beautiful as does this so-called Reverend Mr. Wood? Is the Savior now to retreat before the clerics who advocate free love?

Is he to admit that he was mistaken nineteen centuries ago and say that he was not as well informed as these modern clergymen? Will he now withdraw from his position and say that he

was too strict for human nature and that he was not realistic?

Has Christ changed his mind?

Is he less understanding than the Reverend Mr. Wood in Baltimore?

Does he know less than Mr. Wood about the urges, the drives, and the temptations of adolescent youth?

If Christ has not changed his mind, can the modern clerics change it for him?

Will he approve a reversal of his teachings?

Will he acknowledge the men who try to make the change? Will he recognize them as his ordained servants? Will he accept the churches which they represent? Will he call them his own?

Will he say that the primrose path is now the road to heaven or that it has become a modern version of the straight and narrow way?

Will he sanction the teaching of immorality to young boys and girls by men who claim to act in his holy name?

For any man to attempt to change the moral law is like trying to change the Deity himself.

It is to ask the Almighty to condone the petting, the necking, the wicked intimacies and perversions which go on in the back seats of automobiles, in motel and hotel rooms, and on park lawns and beaches.

It is asking him to sanction the illegal and murderous abortions which frequently follow.

It is inviting him to smile indulgently and sweetly on misguided young people as they sow the seeds of death and hell.

Easy morality is no morality at all. And certainly where there is no morality, there is no true Christianity either.

No one can make free love a doctrine and practice of the true Church of God, despite all that may be said by the 900 clergymen at Harvard Divinity School or by any other group of ministers or priests speaking before schools and youth groups.

I remind these reverend gentlemen of what their own Bibles say. Or do they no longer believe the scriptures?

And if not, can they truthfully claim to be Christians—or ministers of a Christian God?

Apostasy through Immorality— Paganism

Apostasy through immorality is at least as bad as returning to paganism.

God still says: "Thou shalt not commit adultery; . . ." (Exod. 20:14.)

Christ still says: ". . . whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:28.)

And Paul still says of those who deviate from the path of virtue into some of the great perversions, ". . . they which commit such things are worthy of death. . . ." (Rom. 1:26-32.)

Let our so-called progressive Christians beware, lest like the ancient scribes and Pharisees they find that their house, too, has become desolate.

In this modern day God has restored his pure gospel and his divine Church. Again he teaches the truth about himself and the way to come back into his presence.

Part of that restoration is a restatement of the moral law.

Again comes his precept commanding: ". . . be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." (Isa. 52:11.)

Again he appeals for virtue—complete, chaste, unblemished purity—on the part of his followers, for no unclean thing can come into his presence.

By modern revelation he tells us that sex sin is next to murder in the divine category of crime. (See Alma 39:5.)

Virtue, Fruit of the Restored Gospel

Virtue is as much a part of the restored gospel as baptism and the resurrection.

Chastity is as vital to us as the law and the prophets.

The work of God cannot abide in the midst of iniquity. His people must not partake of the sins of Babylon or they will cease to be his people. Although we are in the world we cannot indulge in its corruption.

We Latter-day Saints have a great modern message. We announce that God has appeared in our day. He has

raised up modern prophets who speak for him, even as did Moses.

He has established his Church again in this generation.

A People of Virtue and Purity

He is rearing a new and modern people, a priestly nation, a people of virtue and purity.

We have hundreds of thousands of youth in this heaven-blessed Church, and they must be taught the restored truth. But they must know that this truth includes virtue as well as worship and that there can be no true worship without chastity.

With all my soul I appeal to the youth of Zion:

Believe with all your heart in the restored gospel as given us through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Believe that this restored gospel is the way of truth and joy. Know that wickedness never was happiness, but that obedience and chastity lead to the abundant life.

Know that virtue is a vital part of the restored gospel and can never be separated from it.

Know and understand that no man or set of men, whether clergymen, educators, or government officials, can change divine law. They are neither greater nor more intelligent than the Almighty.

The Lord asks you to be as clean as he is, so that you may be fit to enter into his presence and become like him, for that is your destiny. May you live for it and thus obtain this great blessing. I earnestly pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve and president of the West European Mission has just spoken to us. He was preceded by Elder Dunn, Elder Tuttle, and Elder McConkie of the First Council of Seventy.

I am pleased to announce that we have received quite a number of telegrams and cablegrams telling of the reception in various countries of the proceedings of this morning's conference. I mention especially the Uruguayan Mission, Albuquerque, New