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Keep the Commandments

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Abstract: This article states that Church members (and those in the world if they only knew) should be grateful that the Lord has given further and clearer light of revelation in the Book of Mormon and other modern scriptures.

Here we are this morning, on a beautiful day. No people could be more comfortable in worship than we are this morning. I am so grateful that I am able to be present. Recently I, with a group of my brothers and sisters, went to Hawaii to celebrate the centennial of preaching the gospel in the Hawaiian Islands. Some of our party expected to find most of the people Hawaiian. But it was found there were Hawaiians, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Samoans, and several other nations I might name, all living there at peace. When our meeting was held in a large building, all of those races were there as members of the Church.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not just for us. It is for the people of the world, all his children, and at the present time we have over 5800 missionaries out in the world, from this little Church. What for? To go to all these people and say, "Keep all the good things that you have, keep all that God has given you that enriches your life, and then let us share something with you that will add to your happiness and increase your satisfaction." That is the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our happiness is conditioned upon our loving our fellow men, all of whom are children of our Heavenly Father.

Right here on this block is one of the greatest missionary fields in the world. I see a man sitting down here in the audience who spends much of his time with the people on this block. He is a wonderful missionary and just as happy as he can be when he is talking about it. When we are doing missionary work to bless the people, we are doing it under the influence of the Lord, and we are sure to be happy.

We welcome you all here this morning. Let us all come into this house, into the houses that may be necessary to be used for the conference, with a spirit of prayer, the spirit of gratitude. Let us appeal to the Lord to bless us, and then those who address us will be inspired. I pray that we may all live in such a way that our Heavenly Father can have us in his keeping, that we may have joy and satisfaction, and we will have if we have this Spirit.

I pray that his peace may be with us during the continuation of this meeting and the other meetings of the conference, that we may meet with a feeling of gratitude for all our blessings. And when the conference is concluded and we return to our homes, may we do so with the appreciation of the fact that we did wait upon the Lord and that he fulfilled his promise and was with us to bless us. I pray that we may be filled with that spirit that comes from him, and that is a spirit of love, of kindness and helpfulness and of patience and forbearance. Then, if we keep that spirit with us in our homes, our boys and girls will grow up to be what we would like them to be.

That the Lord may add his blessing, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

DECEMBER 1950

KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

By Joseph Fielding Smith

ACTING PRESIDENT

OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE



JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

PRESIDENT George Albert Smith says that this is a wonderful sight. To that I agree. It gives me great pleasure to look into the faces of men and women whose lives are clean; who have faith in God; who have made covenants to serve. President Smith further says that salvation comes through the keeping of the commandments of God. We do not believe that salvation comes from lip service, merely a confession with our lips that Jesus is the Christ. It comes through obedience to every principle and eternal truth pertaining to our exaltation. Let me read to you words of the Lord given to his disciples on this continent as he stood in their presence.

And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.

And this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words.

And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

These words that I have read to you are from the twenty-seventh chapter of III Nephi, verses 16-19 inclusive.

One of my great sorrows is that so many members of the Church fail to recognize this truth which I have read. We are not going to be saved in the kingdom of God just because our names

are on the records of the Church. It will require more than that. We will have to have our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and if they are written in the Lamb's book of life then it is an evidence we have kept the commandments. Every soul who will not keep those commandments shall have his name blotted out of that book.

I am exceedingly grateful this morning for the knowledge which I have, limited as it is, of the gospel of Jesus Christ; of the things that have been revealed for our salvation; for the opportunities which come to us to give service to the Church and to our fellow men. We have so many blessings that the world does not have. The world could have them, but it will not. As the Savior said, speaking particularly of the Jews, many a time would he have gathered them as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but they would not. I wish that every honest soul in this world would read the Book of Mormon; would read the Doctrine and Covenants; the Pearl of Great Price, besides reading the Bible. What a glorious privilege is ours. The so-called Christian world, divided and subdivided, maintains that the Bible contains all of the word of God. To them the Lord has never given a revelation. According to its teachings nothing has come from the heavens by way of counsel and advice or revelation, comparable to that which we find in what they are pleased to call the canon of scripture.

Not long ago, as I was on the train coming home, a minister said to me that the Book of Mormon was a fraud because in the last chapter of the book of Revelation the Lord so declared it. Let me read those words.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Rev. 22:19.)

I said to him, "My good friend, don't you know that when that was written we had no Bible?" This Bible was not compiled as we have it when that was written. That has reference merely to this book of Revelation. Then he was sorry that he had spoken. Well, all they have is what is contained in this book (the Bible), this record that closed nearly two thousand years ago.

See the advantage, brethren and sisters, that we have. Not only do we

(Continued on following page)

have the revelations given to the prophets of ancient Israel, given by our Savior when he was on the earth and by his disciples in that first century, but the Lord has continued to speak; he has given many revelations to others. We have them. We are blessed with the Book of Mormon which contains the principles of the gospel so clearly stated, that we do not stumble over them. We have the Doctrine and Covenants, which is our book particularly, containing the revelations given to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to all the world if it will have them. This book isn't just for us, but we have it. The world won't have it. See what it could have if it would. It could have information, knowledge and wisdom pertaining to the salvation of men, that can't be found in the Bible. I have said, and I think I am right, that there isn't one principle pertaining to the salvation of men that is so clearly stated in the Bible, as it has come down to us, that men do not stumble over—not one thing. There is not one principle they can be united on that has been so clearly stated that they don't find their interpretations of it conflicting.

Do you want to know about the resurrection of the dead? Who is going to be saved in the celestial kingdom of God? Then read your Book of Mormon. Read your Doctrine and Covenants. The seventy-sixth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, known as The Vision, is the clearest, most concise statement regarding salvation that I know anything about, and I doubt if the Lord ever gave to any people at any time upon the face of the earth anything clearer than this revelation. Do the people of the world know where they are going when they die? No. They sing about a beautiful isle of somewhere. They don't know. Can they find out in the Bible? Yes, we can find it. They could find it if they had the right inspiration, but with the added help that we obtain from the records the Lord has given us, we don't stumble over that. We don't stumble over baptism and how it should be performed and by whom. We have a clear and perfect understanding of the nature of God. Now, I can find that in the Bible; so can you. So can they, if they would search for it in the spirit of faith; but they stumble over it; and yet they are not willing to accept the revelations of the Lord given in the day and dispensation in which they live that would set forth clearly to them all these principles of eternal truth. How greatly are we blessed!

Then I have this regret, that so many members of the Church do not avail themselves of this information. The Lord was kind enough and so deeply concerned in the matter that he sent an angel from his presence to reveal the Book of Mormon. For ages he prepared the Book of Mormon that it might come forth to the convincing.

it says, of both Jew and Gentile and the remnant upon this land, that Jesus is the Christ. It was to come forth in a day when men would be denying the Christ. Isn't that true? Is not the world today getting farther and farther away from a knowledge concerning the Son of God? Are not the peoples of the earth beginning, if they have not already reached the point, to deny the literal resurrection of the body and are questioning the resurrection of the Lord himself and his godhood? The Book of Mormon said that would be the case and that it was to come forth as a testimony, as a witness to men that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, and that men will be saved and exalted in the kingdom of God by keeping their hearts pure and obeying all of his commandments. These things the Lord has impressed upon us. In conclusion let me read the covenant we make when we are baptized and come into this Church.

All those who humble themselves before God and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church. (D. & C. 20:37.)

What do you get out of that? I get this: that every soul baptized, truly baptized, has humbled himself; his heart is broken; his spirit is contrite; he has made a covenant before God that he will keep his commandments, and he has forsaken all his sins. Then after he gets into the Church, is it his privilege to sin after he is in? Can he let down? Can he indulge in some of the things which the Lord has said he should avoid? No. It is just as necessary that he have that contrite spirit, that broken heart, after he is baptized as it is before.

Oh, I wish we had the power, we who hold the priesthood, to reach every soul who is not faithful, who is not humbled in his heart—members of this Church—that we might bring them back to a full understanding of the gospel. Is it true that some among us have an idea that it matters not that we sin so long as it is not a grievous sin, a deadly sin, that we will yet be saved in the kingdom of God? Nephi saw our day. He said that people would be saying that. But I say unto you, we cannot turn away from the path of truth and righteousness and retain the guidance of this spirit of the Lord.

May the Lord bless the Latter-day Saints. May he bless all people. Oh, I wish that we would all humble ourselves and seek the truth which the Lord has declared to us by his own word in this day in which we live. The Lord bless us all, help us to be true and faithful and keep his commandments, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHILDREN

By

PRESIDENT George Albert Smith said this morning that it was not enough for people to have their names on the records of the Church in order to be saved in the kingdom of God, but that it was necessary to keep the commandments.

Then Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said the same thing and read to us the covenant of baptism, that is the covenant which we take in the waters of baptism.

We are a covenant-making and a covenant-taking people. We have the gospel which is the new and the everlasting covenant: new in that the Lord has revealed it anew in our day; everlasting in that its principles are eternal, have existed with God from all eternity, and are the same unchangeable laws by which all men in all ages may be saved. The gospel is the covenant which God makes with his children here on earth that he will return them to his presence and give them eternal life, if they will walk in the paths of truth and righteousness while here.

We are children of the covenant which God made with Abraham, our father. To Abraham, God promised salvation and exaltation if he would walk as the Lord taught him to walk. Further, the Lord covenanted with Abraham that he would restore to Abraham's seed the same laws and ordinances, in all their beauty and perfection, which that ancient patriarch had received. "For as many as receive this Gospel," the Lord said to him, "shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father." (Abraham 2:10.)

Now we have this same everlasting covenant. We have the restored gospel, and every person who belongs to the Church, who has passed through the waters of baptism, has had the inestimable privilege of making a personal covenant with the Lord that will save him provided he does the things he agrees to do when he enters into that covenant with God.

Alma recited this personal covenant of salvation at the waters of Mormon in language like this—all of it is, of course, summed up in the promise to keep the commandments of God—but Alma gives these particulars: He says that when we go into the waters of baptism we covenant that we will come into the fold of Christ and be numbered with his people. We covenant that we will take upon ourselves the name of Christ and be Saints in very deed. We covenant that we will bear one another's burdens, that they may be light. We covenant that we will mourn with those that mourn. We covenant that we will comfort those that stand in need of comfort. We