The Sabbath day

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Today has been a very challenging day for me. I do not know if I will do anything with this paper or not but I am going to try to write down my feelings to see if it will help me personally with my feelings.

We were woke this morning at day break with the sounds of equipment. It took a minute for my mind to register what was happening. I know that today was Sunday and suddenly I realized that the equipment was going to the pistachio orchard to harvest. I had been told that when the harvest started it would be a continual busily of noises and commotion around our place. It had not entered my mind that it included the Sabbath. Last week in our Fast and Testimony meeting I felt impressed that I should bare my testimony as to importance of observing the Sabbath. I told of a Brother in our Ward when I was a youth and how he had all his years work threatened to be lost because he would not let men work on his farm on Sunday. I remember of his testimony on how the Lord blessed him because of his Faith. Ever since I can remember I have been taught the importance of observing this commandment. I remember listing to all the Prophets speak on this subject. I don’t know just when the Primary song “Saturday is a Special Day” has been an importance song taught to the children. I remember lessons from my youth in Sunday school and Priesthood classes. I remember my Priest Advisor giving us a lesson on the need to observe the Sabbath Day. He said that sometimes the “ox may get in the mire” but if we had to work or do anything in which we made a profit on the Lords day, he suggested that we owed that gain to the Lord because it was earned on the Lords day. The next week he said that he had to repent, he had never been tested so quickly; as when he returned home from giving that lesson; he had a man come to his home needing to buy an item that my adviser sold in his profession. He said that he did everything he could to get the man to wait until Monday morning but to no avail. He therefore donated his commission to the Lord before he came to Priesthood meeting. When I returned from the Air Force, jobs were very hard to find. I went up to my brothers in Idaho hoping to work for him but his work was very slow also. After some time I was offered a job at a service station but was told that I would have to work Sundays. Not knowing what else to do I accepted the job. On the first Sunday I felt so guilty, that on Monday morning when I went back to work I went to the boss and told him that I had to resign. When I told him that I just couldn’t feel good about working on the Sabbath, he said I told you what was expected before he gave me the position. I apologized, but said that I couldn’t do it. He thought for a minute and said that he had another employee that came to him asking for more time so he would let him have the Sunday shift and I could work Monday thru Friday. When I first went to work for the Church Farm, I was told that because of the cost of starting up the irrigation pump, also because the wheel lines were very venerable to the wind if they were empty, that I would have to keep the pump running 24 hours a day. To change the irrigations was at best a three hour job. I also had about 100 heifer calves that I raised so had to feed and care for every day. The first year every Sunday I felt that the “Ox was in the mire” and so took care of these items daily. I always felt a little guilty at these chores but then one Sunday a widow who lived across the street from the farm; asked me “Why is it ok for the Church Farm to require work and yet teach that we should observe the Sabbath?” That really caused me some reflection and from then on I did everything possible to prepare things so as to minimize the work required on the Sabbath.

Earlier on a Sunday morning we were woke with sprayers spraying the orchard. When I asked about that I was told that because of the need to get the spraying done, they had to hire an independent contractor to spray the orchard and he worked seven days a week or he wouldn’t accept the job. I think that I rationalized that South Valley Farm wasn’t doing the work so maybe it was up to the independent contractor. Again with the harvest of the pistachio, independent contractors will be involved. This time my mind will not accept the rationalization I used before.

I am sure that there are many things that I do not understand about the pistachio operations. This call to serve on a nut farm has been a very educational challenge to me. I talked to Lee and to Jay about the problem and both explained that the pistachios are a perishable crop. I just can’t convince myself that there can’t be away around the problem. From my understanding the pistachio orchard is the original orchard for this farm and the farm was started about 20 years ago. It is hard for me to feel that in 20 years we can’t solve this problem except for a lack of Faith. I really wonder if the presiding authorities are aware of the situation and what is happening.