

effort and nullify it by such conduct at home that people, noticing the way you act, complain that you do not live what you preach?

We love your boys, we love your daughters, who are out in the field—neat, tidy, dignified, soft-spoken, living lives of Christians. Then we find that sometimes you do not live at home that which they preach. Let us preach by our lives that which God has given unto us, that we may bear testimony unto the world that the Gospel can really become the power of God unto our salvation, if we will abide by its precepts. Then we will grow in grace. Love for God's word will be in our hearts. Love and devotion for his work will constantly be with us. We will serve him. We will win our own reward and our own salvation.

I rejoice in the work in which we are engaged. My wife and I have never been happier than we are at this moment. We finished a mission tour of three thousand miles just before I came here to conference. We have joy in our labors, and thank God for the privilege of serving. We ask his blessing upon all his people, those who are engaged in his work, that the work may prosper throughout the world and grow to be, as it were, an ensign unto the nations, to look up to, an example to be followed, that they might be saved temporally and spiritually, and I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

“O ye mountains high” was sung by the congregation.

ELDER STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

A MAGNIFICENT GIFT

A few weeks ago in company with President Grant, I had the privilege of inspecting a very beautiful building. The architecture was superb, a rare combination of elegance and utility. In the portal were handsome columns of Venetian marble and massive doors of real bronze. The main corridor boasted portraits of the old masters in art and science done in Italian mosaic. The building housed a great library with commodious reading rooms and studies for the accommodation of students. It was said to have cost more than a million dollars. It was the gift of a rich man.

When I saw inscribed on a plaque the name of the man who gave it, rather strange thoughts and feelings came to me which I have pondered a good deal since. The name of the donor is connected with one of the most notorious scandals of our country in recent years. I do not attempt to pass judgment on him. My knowledge of the facts is not sufficient for that, but I do know that some of his associates served prison terms for participation in the transactions that are reputed to have brought fabulous wealth to this man.

Here are some of the thoughts that passed through my mind as I contemplated the magnificent gift of an American multi-millionaire to an institution of the people. Can a man with money in this great country of ours buy immunity for wrong-doing? Does the public have indul-

gences for sale, if the price is sufficiently large? Are we concerned with how a man gets his money or merely with how much he has? Just what are the standards of integrity and honesty prevalent among us today? These and related questions have occupied my attention considerably. I propose them as a basis for some remarks here today.

MEN MISTRUST MEN

The President of the United States in a recent utterance said in substance that the greatest thing we have to fear is fear itself. I think he is right. What gives rise to fear and apprehension? The answer is simple, I believe. Lack of confidence. And why lack of confidence? Again the answer is simple. Men mistrust men. I do not believe that people generally have lost faith in our fundamental institutions. The Constitution of the nation is a sacred and revered document to the overwhelming majority of Americans. We take immeasurable pride in the concepts of liberty, equity and justice which it breathes and protects. While there have arisen outspoken opponents of the capitalistic system under which we administer our economic order, yet there is certainly no such wide-spread and organized public opinion against it as to seriously endanger its continuance. People are desirous that it should be regulated but not abandoned.

Ignorance, of course, is a real source of fear but I am convinced that with increased facilities for the dissemination of knowledge this factor is being perceptibly diminished.

So I am forced to the conclusion that in the final analysis the one chief item which has basically contributed to our present deplorable state and continues to retard recovery is distrust in the dependability, integrity and honesty of men. After all constitutions, laws and institutions are but vehicles for the expression of character in the men and women of any state or society. Incorporeal rights may be important but their administrators are infinitely more tangible. We may argue about principle, but it is a man who takes our money or puts us in jail. It becomes important to bring out into the open some of the causes and conditions which have contributed to a state of public distrust and, regrettable as it may seem, a dearth of common honesty.

MODERN BUSINESS METHODS

In this connection I feel sure that the methods of modern business have played a very conspicuous part. In many jurisdictions where horse-racing, dog-racing, lotteries and slot machines have been penalized by law, business gambling has been among the most respectable of all vocations. We have experienced the wildest orgy of speculation the world has ever known and we are now discovering, according to reports following investigations, that the public has been fleeced by misrepresentation and deceit of enough money to pay the national debt twice over. Misrepresentation is the usual concomitant of gambling and I think of all get-rich-quick schemes. The principle of honesty seems to be inherent in sound labor, but it is ordinarily conspicuous by its absence in the manipulations that bring returns without work.

Now the most serious aspect of this period of speculation is probably not the loss of the huge sums of money involved. I believe it to be rather a demoralization of hundreds of thousands of citizens of our own and other countries. They have seen millionaires made and unmade overnight. Those who have profited in many instances have concluded that good work and honesty do not pay, that is, not nearly so generously as manipulation. Those who have lost are frequently embittered and resolve on equally unworthy schemes of recoupment and reprisal against the system from which they have suffered. Mutual confidence has received a great set-back because common honesty has been depreciated.

LACK OF CORPORATE HONOR

It is a strange thing that many men will do in corporate or group capacity what they would not dare to do individually. Corporations and syndicates are born for the promotion of enterprises and schemes to which men contribute their money and their names when individually these same men would not sell the same schemes to friends and neighbors. There are sound indications that the group consciousness has been dulled. This too is demoralizing to individual standards of honesty. Until we become as scrupulous for corporate honor as for individual honor, business as a whole will continue under a moral cloud.

THE LEGITIMATE FUNCTION OF BUSINESS

I am not sure but that there prevails pretty generally a serious misconception with reference to the legitimate function of business. So much emphasis has been laid upon competition, that many have reached the conclusion that only the strongest can survive and that it is proper to do anything to survive. Until business shall come to be regarded as the beneficent agent for the conversion of human energy and the elements of the universe into things of necessity, convenience and beauty, with equitable recognition of all factors involved, it will ever be a fertile source of deceit and misrepresentation. What a pity it should be so. The very foundation upon which the substantial businesses of the world have been built is good character. Honor and dependability are the bases of credit the world over, and credit is the life-blood of business.

LACK OF POLITICAL HONOR

Much as I hesitate to reflect upon our government, I cannot refrain from calling attention to governmental practises which I am sure have contributed to the decline of private and public honor. The old saying that all is fair in love and war seems to be painfully applicable to politics as well. Since no campaign is in progress at the present time, one can speak without great hazard of being accused of partisan motives. False representations of persons and parties, innuendoes and half truths designed to besmirch character, and promises given with no intention of fulfilment, are all so common in our political procedure that our inclination is to suspect rather than to believe, and we seldom take a candidate, party or promise at face value. Sectionalism, trading for advantage and

pork barrel legislation have degraded our politics to such an extent that real statesmanship is indeed at a premium. With hundreds of thousands of persons in the nation directly or indirectly feeding at the public crib, utilizing every available means at their disposal, either fair or foul which may escape the penalties of the law, for the retention of their positions, and with other hundreds of thousands seeking to displace them, not imbued in the main with any motives other than to put themselves in lucrative positions; will any one contend that such conditions have not tended to reduce materially the standards of public and private integrity throughout the country?

So long as public patronage continues to be the major item in public service, it cannot be otherwise. So long as we tolerate a system of political ethics which permits a man to brazenly announce his own candidacy and more brazenly still appeal and contrive for public support to win for himself an office as if it were a personal perquisite, so long as men call themselves instead of awaiting the call of country, we can scarcely hope for better days in the cause of common political honor.

DEMORALIZING INTEGRITY OF OUR CITIZENSHIP

I am driven to the conclusion, much as I should like to avoid it and the reflection which it entails, that the great institution of politics which in its true essence is the science of civil government has harbored so much of personal and group selfishness, so much of craftiness, chicanery, misrepresentation and vilification to gain the ends of self-seekers, that it must be counted as one of the large contributing factors in the demoralization of the integrity of our citizenship. You know and I know that many of the country's best and most capable men positively decline participation in political affairs for reasons which I have mentioned. It is a great pity. We all suffer because of it. I wish we might rectify such conditions. I believe that there is a serious-minded disposition on the part of great numbers of our citizens to do so. The times are fortuitous for a change. God grant that it may come speedily.

In saying the things I have said it is not my purpose to cast reflection upon all of our public servants. There are many notable exceptions to the general observations I have made, but they are exceptions unfortunately. They are not the rule in American politics today.

USING RELIGION FOR ULTERIOR PURPOSES

And now I propose to discuss briefly the influence of religion on the questions I have propounded for your consideration. It may seem almost sacrilegious to mention it in the same breath with business and politics as a possible contributor to some of our moral maladies, but I must tell you frankly that I honestly believe it has its place in that category. Not that religion itself is censurable, but false and insincere professors of religion have dealt blows to the cause of moral honesty that are even more disastrous than those arising out of business or politics, and this for the reason that religion reaches deeper into the moral fiber of man than the other items which deal chiefly with temporalities.

There is no deceit like religious hypocrisy. There is no crook comparable to the pious crook. I hesitate to use these extreme terms but I cannot conceal my contempt for the man who imposes on his fellows under a church cloak—whose life is a spiritual lie. I hope there are not many such in the world. I think they are relatively few but there have been altogether too many who have used religion for ulterior purposes. In so doing they have done infinitely more than merely to bring injury to themselves and the victims of their deceit. They have served as perhaps nothing else has done to destroy faith and confidence in religion itself and in the virtues which it supports.

I am one who believes that revealed religion is the real mother of all true morality. Certainly for mankind in general, religious conviction is the firmest prop of his goodness. To destroy the prop is to endanger the collapse of the whole moral and ethical structure which rests upon it. I believe that throughout all time the greatest enemies of religion have been found within and not out of the churches. One man professing religious allegiance and devotion but living a lie can do more to tear down faith and loyalty and plant the seeds of distrust and deceit than many good men can repair with arduous labors.

EFFECT OF UNRIGHTEOUS EXERCISE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

I hope I shall not give offense if I venture some applications of this principle. The man who uses the influence and prestige of his ecclesiastical office for the furtherance of personal and selfish interests, injures the cause of religion and sows the seeds of dishonesty. Spiritual power is the most sacred power entrusted to man. It is given for holy purposes. If it is exercised "in any degree of unrighteousness," "amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man." Not only is his priestly action vitiated but he has done irreparable injury to the cause of religion itself. Thousands of honest people not able to distinguish between the hypocrisy of men and the cause itself have turned a deaf ear to the appeal of truth. Stories and plays built around the theme of the pretending, insincere worshiper have been a deterrent to faith in men for ages past. Such circumstances seem hard on religion, but are the conclusions not justified? Who should be held to a higher degree of accountability than the one who professes to have received absolute knowledge of God's truth.

THE STANDARDS OF A RELIGIOUS MAN

It is the truth that makes men free, free from ignorance, free to choose the right. It is the truth—the knowledge of things as they were, as they are and as they will be which gives to men vision, understanding and wisdom. It is reasonable that more should be expected of those who have the truth. Can a man who has testimony of the truth lie a little, steal a little, or malign his neighbor with impunity? Who sets the standard for a religious man? Is it the community in which he lives, the customs which have become prevalent? No. His standards are set in the revelations of God. Through his faith he hears the commandments of the Lord declared from Sinai resounding down through the ages: "Thou

shalt not steal." "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." He knows that these injunctions are unequivocal and eternal. He knows that they are the foundation of virtue and he knows that they are essential to the eternal welfare of the race. Of course, more is expected of the religious man.

CHARGED WITH AN IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY

Fellow members of the Church, I may overestimate our position in the world, our opportunities and responsibilities, but I declare it as my solemn conviction that no other organization is charged so definitely with the responsibility of sustaining the true and eternal standards of virtue in the world as is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We know that these standards are imperiled today but I confidently believe that if it can be demonstrated that three-quarters of a million people scattered through the nations of the earth, giving allegiance to the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, can live honest, dependable lives, resisting all untoward temptations and influences, that demonstration will serve to convince the teeming millions of the earth that they can do likewise.

We can make that demonstration in one way only. By being what we profess to be—disciples of the Christ. How it hurts me, how it injures our cause to see a man, a member of the Church, steal from an employer, default in public office, obtain money by false pretenses, cheat in business, repudiate an honest obligation, lie and deceive for political or other gain. Why, the work of a hundred missionaries can scarcely make amends for the criticism and shame thrown on the people of the Church by one bishop who violates his trust in public office. The loss of money is insignificant compared with the loss of honor. We can and we will recoup our financial misfortunes but it will be most difficult for us to regain our enviable reputation for fair and honorable dealing if we ever lose it. I pray God we never will.

I think if I were permitted to offer one prayer only for my brothers and sisters it would be this: O God, keep us honest under the pressure these hard times have laid upon us. Let us be true to all men and to Thee. Amen.

ELDER SAMUEL O. BENNION

Of the First Council of Seventy and President of the Central States Mission

I pray that I may be led to say that which the Lord would have me say on this occasion for our good. There is an excellent spirit among the Latter-day Saints and I do appreciate the opportunity I have had for a goodly number of years of coming home to attend the conferences of the Church and to partake of that spirit.

I believe with all my heart, my brethren and sisters, that the mission of this Church is to carry the Gospel of salvation to the children of men, for their benefit, not only here but in the eternities