

ask you, "Do you love Jesus Christ?" with one accord I am sure you would respond in the affirmative, and in response to such, I feel sure the words of the Christ would come down through the centuries, declaring again, "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs."

May God bless each and every one of us that we will feel highly honored in teaching the people to the end that we might have a part in the Lord's greatest plan and work, best declared in his words:

For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. (Moses 1:39.)

which I humbly pray each and every one of us will endeavor to do, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MILTON R. HUNTER

Of the First Council of the Seventy

It is indeed an inspiring sight to stand here and look into the faces of the thousands of holders of the priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have been thinking while sitting here tonight that there is more divine authority, more right to use that divine authority in this building tonight than in all of the rest of the world combined. We have here the President of the Church, who holds the keys of the priesthood, the keys of the kingdom of God; we have here the General Authorities, who have been delegated certain rights, authority, and power of that priesthood, and we have many other holders of the priesthood in this audience. I trust and pray that we will carry on our work in this priesthood in a desirable way before our Heavenly Father. I trust that the few words that I say tonight will be inspired by the Spirit of God, because I do feel a weakness in standing before this great assembly.

THE CONDITIONS AT THE CLOSE OF THE WAR

We are all rejoicing during recent days in the fact that the terrible war has come to a close and that the ruthless killings and destruction have been replaced by peace. I, with all of you, hope and pray that all of God's children throughout the entire world will cooperate with our Heavenly Father and his Only Begotten Son in bringing about a permanent peace; but such will be the case only when we all accept and obey the pattern of life established by the Savior, which is conducive to peace.

For a number of years human life has been regarded by the leaders of many nations of the earth as being very cheap. Thousands, yes, millions, of men and women have been ruthlessly sacrificed on the fields of battle. The philosophy of some of the major races of people has completely disregarded the sacredness of human life. Instead of honoring the dignity and worth of mankind, these nations referred to have honored and practically worshipped the glory of the group—that is, the strength, power, and hope of world-

dominance by their nation or race. I believe that throughout the world, generally speaking, the philosophies of men have almost completely disregarded the sacredness and purpose of human life; therefore, I feel a definite need today to present a few ideas regarding the Mormons' concept of the sacredness and purpose of life.

MAN'S EXALTED POSITION IN THE UNIVERSE

Human life is sacred to the Latter-day Saints—as sacred and precious as anything that exists—because of its divine nature. God has revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and to the other holy prophets that we are his children, the divine offspring of heavenly beings. Men and women in general are the greatest of God's creative work, being made in his own image, and endowed through inheritance from our heavenly parents with godly characteristics just as mortal children are endowed with the characteristics of their earthly parents. In other words, we are gods in embryo, for, as Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, has said:

. . . [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. . . . For in him we live, and move, and have our being; . . . For we are also his offspring. (Acts 17:26-28.)

All the prophets of the Church from Joseph Smith's day to the present time have confirmed the teachings of Paul. The following statement was made by President Joseph F. Smith:

Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality.

This beautiful doctrine of the divinity of man does not detract in the least from the glory and great exaltation of God the Eternal Father. It merely dignifies and exalts man and makes human life more sacred and purposeful. It fills the universe with meaning, with design, and attaches to life a goal; and an understanding of this doctrine should fill man's heart with love, charity, and good will toward all of the human family.

If one accepts that he is a son of God, in contrast to the concept that he is the offspring of an animal, he becomes impressed with the unlimited potential possibilities which are his. His eyes are turned heavenward instead of toward the ground. His hope is to become glorified—exalted—even like unto his heavenly parents.

Because of the closeness of the relationship between God and man and because of the great value and sacredness of human life, the Eternal Creator has always shown a special interest in the human family. He revealed to Father Adam the gospel plan of salvation, and has continued to reveal to his children from that day forward eternal truths to the full amount and extent that they were capable of receiving. He has established several gospel dispensations upon the earth; and throughout the entire course of human history he has earnestly pleaded with men to live in peace, in love, and in harmony

with each other, as advocated in that divine plan. But ruthless and ungodly men from time to time have disregarded the sacredness of human life, and have brought wars, suffering, disease, and shame upon the human family.

HUMAN LIFE PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD

In spite of the actions of his children, God has continuously retained his interest in them. He sent his Only Begotten Son into the world to teach us that we should love the Lord our God with all our hearts and that we should love our neighbors as ourselves. This divine teacher—the Man of Galilee—attached a sacredness to human life that has never been fully appreciated nor comprehended by mortals. It is true that chosen Israel had known the perennial law of "Thou shalt not kill"; but the magnificent doctrine declared by the Son of God was that ". . . there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over the sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15:10.) In words of tenderness and power the Master of life and death told his eager listeners the beautiful parables of "The Lost Sheep," of "The Lost Coin," and that the well need no physician, but he who is ill. With open arms he cried, "All ye who are sick and weary come unto me, and I will give you rest." Never before had the downtrodden, the outcast, and the discouraged of the human family received such a powerful ray of light to heal them of their afflictions and to turn them unto God and unto a better life as when they felt the power of the message of the Master. Even the sinner learned that he and life were important, and that there was hope for him to receive something more beautiful, more joyous, and more godly than he had hitherto experienced.

After delivering a message of peace and hope to a troubled world, Jesus Christ gave his life as a voluntary sacrifice in order that we might live. Human life is so sacred and so valuable to the Eternal Father "that he gave his Only Begotten Son in order that we might gain eternal life." Even in our day Jesus has again emphasized the importance of a human soul in the following declaration:

. . . if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me! (D. & C. 18:15-16.)

It is no wonder that the angels of heaven rejoice when God's children repent and seek after eternal life.

THE RELIGION OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS A PRACTICAL ONE

Another reason why Mormons maintain that life is sacred is that God has revealed to them that life is eternal. We believe that we build our own characters through the actions we commit—whether

they be evil or good; and the type of characters we mould for ourselves will be ours throughout the eternities.

Thus, thinking upon the sacredness and eternal nature of life leads us into the doctrine of the purpose of life. One of the most clear-cut statements given in the scriptures on the purposes of life was a remark made by Father Lehi to his children. In his own words: "Men are that they might have joy." That concept is basic in the philosophy of Mormonism. We maintain that life and religion are the same thing; that religion is a seven-day-a-week concern of our people, and that it concerns itself with the temporal as well as the spiritual phases of life. To the Mormons the bread-and-butter problem is as much religion and of interest to our Church as is attending meetings or taking care of the other spiritual duties. If men have joy in sufficient abundance, they must have a proper amount of economic prosperity. Therefore, one of the purposes of life is to arrange, distribute, and equalize wealth in such a manner as to bring joy to the largest number of people. If the gospel of Jesus Christ were lived as the Master intends that it should be, all of God's children throughout the world, would enjoy the blessings derived from economic security.

A life of joy is a life free from sin. In the words of another Nephite prophet: "Sin never was happiness." It should be said, then, that one of the main purposes of life is to have opportunities to learn the will of God and choose for ourselves the amount of obedience which we desire to render. In fact, Mormonism teaches that one of the main purposes of mortal existence is to give us the opportunity to partake of all the good experiences of mortality, and through the great principle of faith follow the road of progression and righteousness which will eventually bring us back into the presence of our Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son.

In other words, the Mormon concept of the purpose of life is growth—growth intellectually, growth physically, growth morally, and growth spiritually. We call that principle of growth, eternal progression. Mortality marks one short span in the process, but to us today it is the most important period, because God has declared that if we keep this estate in righteousness we shall have glory added upon our heads forever and ever.

The immortal beings in the unseen world and the children of men upon the earth are working in cooperation to bring about this perpetual growth of human personality. The greatest revelation ever given on this subject was when God informed Moses as follows:

For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. (Moses 1:39.)

If we add to this statement the following pertinent remarks made by the Master of life, wherein he said:

I am come that they [men] might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10.)

And again,

. . . this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, (John 17:3.)

then we see more clearly God's purpose of our mortal and eternal existence.

THE WAY TO KNOW GOD

The only way we can know God is to live as he lives, to think as he thinks, and to experience what he experiences. Interpreted in this light, we are brought face to face with the powerful Mormon doctrine which declares that "As man is God once was, and as God is man may be." It is positively true that the growth, the eternal progression, for which life offers opportunities reach their culminating point in a life patterned after that of Jesus; therefore, it is the purpose of life to live as the Savior taught us to live and as he himself lived.

I trust in faith to our Heavenly Father that he will help us that we may live that type of life. Before closing I wish to bear testimony that I am sure that we are all engaged in the work of God. I feel thankful to him for the opportunity that I have and that you have in the priesthood, in helping in his great cause. I know that the prophets of the Lord from Joseph Smith's time, to and including the present President of the Church, are divinely inspired and called of God our Eternal Father, and I wish to sustain the President of the Church with all my heart in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir Men's Chorus sang the hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour."

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Truly, as sung so impressively by the male chorus, we "Need Thee Every Hour"—especially the men who lead this Church, not only the General Authorities, but those in stakes and wards, in quorums, in organizations, and in the missions—all who in any way have the responsibility of guiding the people.

SOURCE OF POWER IN PRIESTHOOD

Jesus the Christ is the source of the power of the priesthood. Yesterday morning when the quorums voted as groups, there radiated a power which I am sure was felt by everyone. We felt it tonight when the thousands here assembled sang: "Do What Is Right." You sang with a force which indicated your intention to do just that thing.

As long as the priesthood merits the guidance of Christ by honest and conscientious dealing with their fellow men, by resisting evil in any of its forms, by the faithful performance of duty, there is no opposing power in this world which can stay the progress of the