

among the most serious of the problems that all must confront. This is a subject that touches every man, woman, and child, both psychologically and morally. Sometimes it is tragic, but often it is happy and blessed. Here is an opportunity for men and women everywhere to measure up to one of the greatest responsibilities of life.

It is hoped that this brief and sketchy outline may call to the attention of members of the Church their responsibilities as members of family units, in which they have opportunity to cooperate in the great and continuing work of our Heavenly Father. It is hoped also that our friends who are attending this conference in person or by means of radio and television may get a clearer outline of the Church's doctrine with respect to the home and the eternity of the marriage covenant that is so fundamentally a part of the restored gospel.

### Man is precious in the sight of God

Potentially, man is more precious in the sight of God than all the

planets and suns of space. Incomprehensibly grand as are the physical creations of the earth and space, they have been brought into existence as a means to an end; *they* are the handiwork of God; *man* is his son. The supreme purpose of creation is, in his own words, "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

Thus we emphasize the dignity of the individual, his supreme importance in the family unit and in society, his potential unfolding into a Godlike status, and eventually his exaltation in the celestial kingdom. We pray for divine guidance to this end in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner:

We have just listened to President Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency of the Church.

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us.

### Elder Mark E. Petersen Of the Council of the Twelve

I earnestly pray that the Holy Spirit will assist me as I stand before you this morning.

One of the Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes these words: "We believe in being honest. . . ." (Article of Faith 13.)

### Honesty basic to true Christianity

This is one of the most important tenets of our religion, and for many people it is one of the most difficult to live. Honesty is as basic to true Christianity as baptism or the resurrection of the dead. It is the foundation of all character development. Just as no man can see the kingdom of heaven without baptism, as explained by the Savior, so it may be said with equal truth that no dishonest man, except he repents, can see the kingdom of heaven.

### . . . to civilization

Our Christian civilization is built upon integrity. Without it our way of life would collapse. If we allow dishonesty to weave itself into the fabric of our lives, we invite moral suicide.

Dishonesty in the world is appalling. The cost of major crime is shocking in the extreme, but petty crime involving far more people is becoming a national disgrace. It is almost incredible that here in the United States, for example, shoplifting costs our stores nearly three billion dollars a year. Most shoplifters are women and children.

Other types of petty crime cost American businessmen an additional billion dollars annually.

One hotel in New York last year lost 18,000 towels, 355 silver coffee pots, 15,000 fingerbowls, and 100 Bibles.

Seventy-five percent of all insurance claims are estimated to be dishonest, costing insurance companies 350 million dollars a year in overpayments. Cheating in school is admitted by hosts of our students.

And yet, lest we think that dishonesty is completely engulfing us, we should recall that department stores, for example, when reporting on their charge accounts, say that the rate of default is less than 2 percent. Last year fewer than 2,000 people out of 102 million taxpayers were indicted for income tax fraud. It is estimated by revenue officials that 95 percent of all income is reported to the government. So said the September 9 issue of *Time* magazine.

In a recent *Look* magazine survey of teen-agers, it was most heartening to note that these young people said they want to live honestly in what they call "this dishonest world."

We claim to be a Christian people. But to what extent have true Christian principles become a part of our lives?

### Conduct shows faith

Are our daily habits indicative of a genuine Christian conversion?

Is our personal conduct a reflection of Christlike virtues?

Can any professed Christian be a Christian indeed if he is not honest?

What is the gospel for—merely to talk about?

Or is it something to *live*, to incorporate in our daily conduct?

The Savior said it is to assist us to become perfect in all we do, as perfect as God.

Then is there any place for deceit in a true Christian life?

Is not dishonesty an apostasy from Christ to the extent of our misbehavior?

Can we have a living faith in Christ without doing his works?

To profess belief in him and yet refuse to live his laws seems to be a dishonest act in itself.

### No Christian life without honesty

The Christian religion cannot be separated from the Christian life, and

there can be no Christian life without honesty.

When the Savior told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, he spoke of honesty.

When he told us to do unto others as we would be done by, he again spoke of honesty.

When he told us to go the extra mile, to give our cloak as well as our coat, if need be, and even to turn the other cheek, he again spoke of honesty.

When he advised us to reconcile any differences we may have with others, he spoke of honesty.

When he vigorously denounced the hypocrites, he defended the principle of honesty.

When he described the Good Samaritan, he extolled not only an act of mercy, but a man who was being honest with himself in regard to his fellowman.

When he taught us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, he asked us to be honest both with God and ourselves.

When he told us to avoid judging other people, he again spoke of honesty.

When he blessed the pure in heart, the merciful, the meek, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, he glorified honesty.

When he taught repentance as a principle of salvation, he commanded us to bring honesty into our lives.

When he permitted us to seek remission of our sins through baptism, he expected us to do so honestly.

When he taught the moral law, again he taught us to be honest with ourselves, with our fellowmen, and with God.

When he said that we cannot serve both God and manmon, he spoke of this same principle of honest living.

When he commanded us to become perfect even as our Father in heaven, he most certainly taught the strictest kind of honesty.

When he said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," he spoke of honesty and integrity. (Matt. 5:20.)

When he advised his listeners, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt," again he spoke of honesty. (Matt. 6:19.)

When he said, "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness," he spoke of dishonesty. (Matt. 6:23.)

When he taught us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, he referred to sincerity of purpose, which is honesty.

He asked at one time: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" In doing so, he held up the principle of honesty. (Matt. 7:3.)

When he counseled, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," he expected us to walk in straight paths, and to honestly and sincerely avoid crooked ways. (Matt. 7:13.)

And when he said, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit," he referred to honesty and its ugly opposite. (Matt. 7:17.)

He warned against devious ways by saying: ". . . fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather, fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28.)

And yet, how gracious he was in his kindly invitation to help us to overcome our evil tendencies: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls." (Matt. 11:28-29.)

### Honesty and charity

But can rest come to the insincere? Can they have peace of mind? They can if they change their ways and repent, but not otherwise.

Honesty is intimately and inseparably related to true charity.

Charity is the perfect love of Christ. Can there be true charity, then, without honesty? Is there any charity in a dishonest act?

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not

honesty, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." (See 1 Cor. 13:1.)

How is a man profited if, by dishonorable means, he shall gain the whole world but lose his own soul?

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

It is unthinkable that anyone would hide under a cloak of piety while deceiving his fellowmen, yet it is done.

Paul once asked the Corinthians if Christ is divided. I now ask the same question.

### Conflict of conduct and principle

Paul referred to denominational schisms. I refer to conflicts in principle.

Is Christ divided on any matter of principle? Does he deal in double standards? Does he countenance devious practices? Is there any duplicity in him? Then can duplicity exist in his followers?

What does he mean when he says: "Thou shalt not lie," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not covet," "Thou shalt not bear false witness"?

Does he give us permission to tell little lies with the understanding that we will not tell big ones?

Does he allow us to steal a little here and a little there, providing we do not commit grand larceny?

The Book of Mormon speaks of the power of the devil in latter days and tells of his persuasive efforts to cheat and deceive human beings.

The scripture says he will cause anger to rage in the hearts of some, but others "will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, [so] that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains from whence there is no deliverance." (2 Ne. 28:21-22.)

Lucifer also urges us to "eat, drink,

Sunday, October 2

Third Day

and be merry," saying, "it shall be well with us.

"... Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die: and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God." (2 Ne. 28: 7-8.)

What a pity that so many people actually believe that devilish doctrine!

With false teachings such as those, Lucifer induces many to cross the line into his realm, persuading them that they can, in fact, serve two opposing masters and get gain from both.

But there is only one God and only one way to be saved in his presence. That is by avoiding all forms of hypocrisy and by honestly and sincerely keeping his commandments.

### He is God of charity, mercy and law

He is truly a God of charity and mercy, but he is also a God of law. He has said in clear and precise terms that no unclean thing can come into his presence.

Dishonesty is uncleanness. It is a form of filth that must be shunned by every true follower of the Savior.

There is no salvation without true charity, and true charity embraces the spirit of brotherly love to the point that it permits no injustice on the part of any one of us toward our fellowmen—no deceptions, no dishonesty, and no predatory designs.

As the ancient prophet said, a man must "have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing. . . ."

Charity "rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth. . . ." (Moro. 7:45-46.)

Another Book of Mormon prophet said further: ". . . except ye have charity ye can in no wise be saved in the kingdom of God. . . ." (Moro. 10:21.)

Then who can be saved?

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

"He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation," (Ps. 24:3-5.)

I earnestly and humbly pray, Latter-day Saints, that we may be sufficiently true to the articles of our faith, that we may be sufficiently devoted to the Savior of the world that we will be willing to accept and live this very important article of our faith, "We believe in being honest," and for this I earnestly pray in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner:

He who has just addressed us is Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve.

The Tabernacle Choir and the congregation will now join in singing "The Spirit of God Like A Fire Is Burning," with Richard P. Condie conducting, and Alexander Schreiner at the organ, following which we shall have a brief organ interlude. If you will all stand, please.

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Congregation and Tabernacle Choir:  
"The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning."

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### President N. Eldon Tanner:

For the benefit of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we again announce that we are gathered in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the sixth session of the 136th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

We shall now hear from Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder McConkie.