

other troublous times have been comforted and shielded from the pitfalls of the adversary. Hear the Master's words as he referred to his people as his children:

"Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, and you are of them that my Father hath given me;

"And none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost.

"Wherefore, I am in your midst, and I am the good shepherd, and the stone of Israel. He that buildeth upon this rock shall never fall.

"And the day cometh that you shall hear my voice and see me, and know that I am."

And then he said:

"Watch, therefore, that ye may be ready." (D&C 50:41-42, 44-46.)

I believe with all my soul that that promise is for you and me today, as we qualify ourselves to be worthy to be called his children.

To this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

For the information of the television and radio audiences who have

just joined with us, we are gathered in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in this the third session of the 141st Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Harold B. Lee, first counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, has just spoken to us.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Richard P. Condie directing and Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will sing, "Coronation Anthem—Glory and Praise to God."

Following the singing, Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

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### President Tanner

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

## Elder Mark E. Petersen

*Of the Council of the Twelve*

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

But we do not believe in honesty merely as a matter of policy. It is far more important than that. Honesty is a principle of salvation in the kingdom of God. Without it there can be no salvation. Just as no

man or woman can be saved without baptism, so no one can be saved without honesty. As we cannot advance in the kingdom of heaven without a resurrection, so we cannot move into celestial realms without honesty.

### Hypocrisy denounced

As God condemns immorality, so he denounces hypocrisy, which is

one of the worst forms of dishonesty. When he describes the hell of the world to come, he specifies that dishonest persons will go there. As no unclean thing can enter the presence of the Lord, so no liar nor cheat nor hypocrite can abide in his kingdom.

Dishonesty is directly related to selfishness, which is its origin and source. Selfishness is at the root of nearly all the disorders that afflict us, and man's inhumanity to man continues to make countless thousands mourn.

### Need for honesty

If all mankind were honest, we could have heaven here on earth. We would have no need for armies or navies, nor even a policeman in the smallest community, for there would be no crime, no invasion of other people's rights, no violence of one person against another.

There would be no grounds for divorce, nor would we have errant husbands or unfaithful wives. Conflict between children and parents would disappear, and juvenile delinquency would come to an end.

### Widespread tendency to lie

But in our society is there anything more widespread than the tendency to lie and deceive?

It is the lie of the drug peddler that tempts a child to indulge, and the lie of the seducer that persuades a girl to surrender her virtue.

It is the lie of the shyster that traps his victim in the fraudulent deal.

It is the lie of the tax evader that puts him behind bars, and the lie of the student that turns him into a cheat at school.

It is the lie of the child—and too often also of the parent—that creates the generation gap.

It is the lie of the shoddy workman that hides a faulty repair.

It is living lie upon lie that makes a man a hypocrite.

It is the lie of a husband or wife that leads to infidelity, and that of the embezzler that makes him falsify his books.

It is the desire to lie and cheat that turns a mother into a shoplifter and the child who assists her into a potential criminal.

It is the lie on the lips of the neighborhood gossip that brings character assassination to many innocent victims.

It is the dishonest one who seeks to take advantage of or to humiliate or to deliberately injure a fellow human being.

It is dishonesty in a householder that persuades him to cheat a little newsboy out of his collections for delivering his newspapers.

It is the lie of a clergyman teaching premarital sex as a type of trial marriage that persuades a girl to lose her virtue. She may be naive or obtuse in accepting his word, but what a price he will have to pay at the judgment bar of God for saying there is no sin in premarital sex when he knows full well that the Almighty has thundered from the heights of Mt. Sinai: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exod. 20:14.)

It is the lie of the hypocrite who berates his wife and belittles his children and is a beast in the home that persuades him to assume a pious role on Sunday and sing in the choir and partake of the sacred emblems of the Lord's supper.

It is the lie of the infatuated girl who deceives her parents as she

enters a life of sin with a boy who would only drag her down.

Breathes there a man with soul so dead who never to himself hath said, We cannot live a lie?

### The devil a liar

We Latter-day Saints believe in God, and because we believe in him, we also believe there is a devil. But the devil himself is a liar—the father of lies—and those who choose to cheat and lie and deceive and misrepresent become his slaves.

Is it any wonder that the scripture says:

"These six things doth the Lord hate:

Yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

A proud look,

A lying tongue,

Hands that shed innocent blood,

An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,

Feet that be swift in running to mischief,

A false witness that speaketh lies, and

He that soweth discord among brethren." (Prov. 6:16-19.)

### Those to suffer hell

In the following verses, the scripture ties this outburst to another heinous sin that is never without its lies and deception—that of lustful sex, which God says will destroy the soul. In modern revelation the Lord describes the hell of the world to come as he lists those who will suffer it, and he says:

"These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.

"These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth.

"These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

"These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, . . ." (D&C 76:103-106.)

### Worthiness to be Christians

Most of us claim to be Christians, bearing the name of Christ and worshiping in his holy name. But are we really Christians at heart? Is our worship truly acceptable to him? This we may determine by asking if we truly keep his commandments. If not, are we worthy to bear his name?

One man asked: "If you had to prove in court that you are a Christian, what would you use as evidence?"

Christians must learn that there is nothing Christlike in deception. There is no righteousness in hypocrisy. There is nothing good about a lie.

We must recognize that if we are not honest we are not clean, in the eyes of God, and that no unclean thing may enter his presence. To resort to dishonest practices is to apostatize from the Christian way of life. Apostasy from Christ becomes anti-Christ, and who among us can afford that? To be anti-Christ is to be against him, to fight against him, even in silent disobedience. To fight against Christ is to put God out of our lives, and that above all things invites self-destruction.

### Existence of God

Men may philosophize and say there is no God; they may call religion a myth; they may build up their own intellectual concepts, but all to no avail. The evidence for God is overwhelmingly greater than

all the protestations and empty theories that seek to abolish him. As one poet has said: "Only the fool contends that God is not."

In this day of great achievement, there is more reason to believe in God than at any other time in our memories. All our explorations, all our scientific accomplishments, even our sending men to the moon, declare the existence and power of God.

There is no precision in chance, and there is no certainty in spontaneity. But there are both precision and certainty in the universe, and these—as our greatest scientists have said—declare the glory of God; and so with the psalmist of old they sing aloud: "The earth is the Lord's and all that therein is." (See Ps. 24.)

### Gospel to be lived honestly

If we are interested in the gospel in the least degree, we should live it wholeheartedly. There is no point in deceiving ourselves and becoming victims of our own indiscretion. It is a fact so simple that even a child may understand—that if we are to be saved in the kingdom of heaven, we must live its laws honestly, completely, and wholeheartedly. To be halfhearted about it is repugnant to the Lord. He has said to the lukewarm that he will spew them from his mouth!

Why do you suppose he commanded that we serve him with all our heart, might, mind, and strength?

Do we not remember that he has said that if we accept his commandments with a doubtful heart and keep them with slothfulness, we are damned? (See D&C 58:29.)

### Sayings to be kept

If we are to be Christians in deed, we should remember and keep these sayings:

"... if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. 5:23-24.)

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matt. 7:12.)

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 22:39.)

And do you recall that the Savior gave us this particular commandment: "Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are"? (Matt. 6:5.) He further explained that "no man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:24.)

There is also this vital scriptural text: "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." (Ps. 101:7.)

When the Almighty spoke from Sinai commanding that we should not steal, in the same breath he said: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," and he also declared that we must covet nothing that is our neighbor's. (See Exod. 20:16-17.)

In modern revelation he said forcefully: "Thou shalt not lie; he that lieth and will not repent shall be cast out." (D&C 42:21.)

And he made an important part of Christian teachings this great precept: "Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm." (D&C 42:27.)

### Avarice and greed

And then quite on the opposite side of the picture, as he taught mankind to avoid avarice and greed, which leads into all forms of dishonesty, he urged that we take the higher route. Instead of taking from

our fellowmen, we must learn to give—to be good Samaritans in very deed; to share with our less fortunate neighbors, and in reality show love for our fellowmen. So he said: “. . . remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support. . . . And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me. . . .” (D&C 42:30-31.)

### A lighter burden

The Savior knows the great burden of sin. He bore that burden in Gethsemane and on the cross for each one of us. He knows that the sinful life is the costly and miserable life, and that wickedness never was happiness. He invites us to bear a lighter burden, one of joy, relief, and deep satisfaction, and he says:

“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 unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt. 1:28-30.)

### Need of repentance

The Lord makes it clear that all have need of repentance, and that if we truly repent and accept his yoke of love and forgiveness and of obedience, he will receive us.

Through his ancient servant John he said:

“. . . if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

On the other hand he said:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:7-9.)

“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

“But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” (1 John 2:10-11.)

### Works of truth

And then we have the words from James that faith without works is dead. We must combine our faith with our works and our works with our faith to be Christians indeed, and our works must be works of truth. (See James 2:17-18.)

The Spirit of God is the spirit of truth. The Savior is the personification of truth. Describing himself he said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6.)

Except through the truth there is no salvation in the kingdom of God, and that truth is Christ. And this is my testimony to you in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Following Elder Petersen's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang “In My Father's House.”

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### President N. Eldon Tanner

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