

Ottley with Alexander Schreiner at the organ.

The Choir will begin this service by singing: "Lo! The Mighty God Appearing."

The invocation will be offered by Elder Loren C. Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Australia Sydney Mission.

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### President Kimball

We shall now hear from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

## President Marion G. Romney

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends everywhere: I have in mind saying a few words about honesty this morning.

### Dishonesty rampant

By way of introduction, I quote from the address given by President John A. Howard of Rockford College, at the 101st annual commencement exercises of Brigham Young University, April 23, 1976. After noting the appalling rate of crime in our midst, he said:

"The swelling tide of crime is matched by the deluge of dishonesty—and I think that word is adequate and accurate. The tide of crime is matched by the deluge of dishonesty on the part of politicians who promise what they know they cannot deliver and who try to deceive the people into believing that projects can always be paid for out of somebody else's pocket. Wherever one looks a narrow concern for self-advantage seems to prevail over any thought of the well-being of the society.

Principles seem to be overwhelmed by expediency. . . .

"The act of 'ratting' . . . in too many places is now regarded as more offensive than the act of cheating. In many places the honor system, which was once a manifestation of honorable people working together, has been discarded. The old concept of honor based on integrity has . . . yielded to a new code of honor based on dishonesty—also known as honor among thieves, which is, in fact, the source of the term *ratting*." (President John A. Howard, Rockford College, Rockford, Illinois.)

### Honesty is basic tenet

In the spring of 1842, Mr. John Wentworth solicited from the Prophet Joseph Smith a statement concerning the history and doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Responding to the request, the Prophet wrote a document which included thirteen paragraphs which we know as "The Articles of Faith of The Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." The last article begins:

"We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men. . . ."

Because the implications of this statement cover about the whole range of human conduct, I shall not here attempt to discuss them all. Rather, I shall limit what I say in these remarks to the first phrase of the article: "We believe in being honest." And since there are endless ways of being honest and dishonest, I shall further limit my remarks to the one definition of honesty which reads: "Honesty implies freedom from lying, stealing, cheating, and bearing false witness." I shall not always attempt to distinguish between lying and bearing false witness, nor between stealing and cheating.

### Lying is sin

By way of justification for discussing these matters, I remind you that they are reported with such frequency in the news media that one is constrained to join with the psalmist in his prayer, "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue." (Ps. 120:2.)

"Sin," said Oliver Wendell Holmes, "has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all." (From "The Chambered Nautilus.")

And William Penn counseled, "When thou art obliged to speak, be sure to speak the truth; for equivocation is half-way to lying, as lying the whole way to hell." (From *Fruits of Solitude*.)

"Nothing else," said President J. Reuben Clark, "is quite so despicable or cowardly as a lie, and it is an added iniquity to befall another with an untruth." (South African Mission Bulletin, January 19, 1971.)

### Satan—father of lies

Lying was initiated on this earth in the Garden of Eden when Satan told

Eve that she would not die in consequence of partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Satan, as a matter of fact, was and is the father of all lies. The Lord said to Moses: "Because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

"And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice." (Moses 4:3-4.)

"Wo unto the liar," said Jacob, the brother of Nephi, "for he shall be thrust down to hell" (2 Ne. 9:34), there to dwell with "the devil, who is the father of all lies" (2 Ne. 2:18).

Lying is so reprehensible that the Lord Himself cannot lie. As long ago as the confusion of tongues at the great tower, the brother of Jared so declared. Having shown him His finger, the Lord asked:

"Sawest thou more than this?"

"And he answered: Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me.

"And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak?"

"And he answered: Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and *canst not lie*." (Eth. 3:9-12; italics added.)

Some two thousand years later, Enos, the son of Jacob, testified to this same truth. Following an all-night vigil praying for forgiveness of his sins, "there came a voice unto [him], saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed."

To this Enos responded: "And I, Enos, knew that *God could not lie*; wherefore, my guilt was swept away." (Enos 5, 6; italics added.)

## God hates lies

Not only is it impossible for God to lie, but He hates lying.

Solomon, the son of David, says: "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him." The first two of the seven which he named are "A proud look, [and] a lying tongue." (Prov. 6:16-17.)

Throughout the scriptures lying is associated with major transgressions. Hosea lists lying with five practices which the Lord said were to bring disaster to Judah.

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel," he says, "for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

"By swearing, and *lying*, and killing, and *stealing*, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

"Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish." (Hos. 4:1-3; italics added.)

## Ananias and Sapphira

In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the Lord impressed upon members of the primitive church that retribution for lying may follow immediately. A practice had been introduced among the saints of selling their possessions and distributing the proceeds "unto every man according as he had need. . . .

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

"And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy

Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

"Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

"And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

"And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

"And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

"And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

"Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

"Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

"And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." (Acts 4:35; 5:1-11.)

## Ultimate consequences

Irrespective, however, of immediate consequences, John the Revelator tells of the ultimate consequences to follow the unrepentant liar:

"And I saw a new heaven," he says, "and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell

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with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

Now comes the fate of the liar:

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. 21:1-8.)

### "Thou shalt not lie"

So far in these remarks we have considered several aspects of lying:

1. That Satan is the father of lying and inaugurated the practice in this world when in the Garden of Eden he lied to Eve.

2. That God cannot lie.

3. That God hates lying.

4. That liars are classified with major transgressors.

5. That they languish in this world.

6. That all unrepentant liars "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8.)

In the twenty-first verse of section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which the Prophet Joseph Smith specified to be the law of the Church, it is written:

"Thou shalt not lie; he that lieth and will not repent shall be cast out"—meaning, of course, excommunicated from the Church.

The twenty-seventh verse of the same section reads:

"Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm."

Remember, brethren and sisters, President Clark's statement: "There is no other armor so strong as truth, none other that will turn aside the shafts of envy, hatred, malice, and all the rest of that great horde of iniquities, as will the simple unadorned truth." (South African Mission Bulletin, January 19, 1971.)

We believe in being honest. May God help us to practice what we believe.

### Cheating and stealing

The vices of cheating and stealing are no less common, nor are they less reprehensible than lying. They are condemned in the scriptures with equal emphasis. From Sinai the Lord commanded Israel, and these commands are binding upon us:

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." (Exod. 20:15-16.)

In the law of the Church as given in this last dispensation, to which we have already referred, the Lord commanded:

"Thou shalt not steal; and he that stealeth and will not repent shall be cast out." (D&C 42:20.)

This means that the unrepentant thief is to be excommunicated from the Church.

Violation of these commandments is reaching appalling proportions in our societies. One source reports that shoplifting alone—to which the prophet referred yesterday and which is one disgusting type of stealing and cheating—is "a billion dollar a year business

in the United States." (*Security Key*, May 1976.)

Another source reports that "seventy percent of all inventory losses are due to employee theft . . . [and that] 76 percent of all employees steal from the companies they work for." (*Deseret News*, Jan. 29, 1976.)

### True doctrine

"We believe in being honest."

I bear you my witness, my brothers and sisters, that this doctrine I've been quoting to you is true and is from the Almighty Himself. He has revealed to us in these latter days the principles by which we may prosper, by which we may perfect ourselves, by

which we may rise from the fallen condition in which we are to the condition we must reach in preparation for the return of the Redeemer to the world. I bear my witness to these truths and to the truths of the gospel as it has been revealed and as we teach it, and I do it humbly in the name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Carlos E. Asay of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder L. Tom Perry

Of the Council of the Twelve

As we approach the end of 1976, it seems appropriate for me to direct my remarks to the Church's participation in the United States of America's observance of its Bicentennial celebration.

### America's Bicentennial

I have had the exciting experience for the last three years of being involved with the Church committee organized to assist in planning for proper observance of this event. During the last few weeks we have been assembling a scrapbook to record the history of our activities relating to this celebration. How I have thrilled with the accomplishments each day as new pages have

arrived! Each piece helps build a beautiful picture of how our involvement has satisfied a need, told a story, taught a lesson, and helped to build an appropriate observance of this great event.

The Bicentennial on the national scene has been characterized as a backyard celebration, for there was no center. It happened in the villages, the towns, and the cities throughout all of the land. The same could be said of the Church. The credit for the accomplishment belongs to the individual families, the wards, the stakes, the missions, and the districts.

Now let me thumb through the pages of this incomplete scrapbook and highlight some of the accomplishments for you, realizing there is one-fourth of the history of this year still to be written.