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Of the First Council of the Seventy

It is an awe-inspiring sight to stand here and look into the faces of this vast audience. It is in humility that I occupy this position today. I pray to our Father in heaven that his Spirit will attend me.

I desire to direct my remarks this afternoon to the youth of the Church. I, like the brethren who have spoken previously, have a strong faith and admiration and love for the youth of the Church. I know that they have a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that they will carry on faithfully.

BLESSINGS PROVIDED FOR YOUTH

Youth of the Church, young men and young women, you are the richest people in the world. Some of you may say in your minds that you have no money. I care not whether you have ten cents or a million dollars. Money perishes; but the wealth that you have surpasses anything that you can gain here in this world which is of the world. You are members of the true Church of Jesus Christ and are recipients of the restored gospel of our Lord and Savior. You have the Holy Priesthood after the order of the Son of God. You have at your command all the blessings which come to those who love God and keep his commandments, even the promise of the blessing of eternal life which he says is the greatest gift that he has for man (D. & C. 14:7; 6:7) if you will but serve the Lord your God with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. (Ibid., 4:2; 50:5; 51:19.)

More than a hundred years ago God the Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and opened up the last dispensation of the gospel. Following this great vision a number of heavenly beings appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and bestowed upon him all the gifts, blessings, powers, ordinances, and priesthood necessary for the salvation of the human family. It is this priesthood and these gifts and blessings which the youth of the Church today possess.

GOSPEL BRINGS JOY

The gospel of Jesus Christ was given to us in order that we might have joy. In fact,

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. (II Nephi 2: 25.)

It is God's purpose and will that we might be happy today, tomorrow, next week, a hundred years from now—yes, a million years from now. You may say in your mind, "But we won't live that long." We will live that long. Life is eternal, and the thing that is important to remember is that the way we live today, and the way we live throughout mortality, will determine our happiness throughout eternity, will determine our status forever.

In order to illustrate what I have in mind, I would like to tell an old story. There was once an old dog that went to the meat market and secured a piece of meat. On the road home he had to cross over a bridge that spanned a stream of water. As he reached the middle of that bridge, he looked down into the sparkling water and saw another dog with a piece of meat in his mouth. He became covetous and decided that he would have the meat the other dog possessed. Thereupon he opened his mouth and grabbed after that meat, and as he did so, his meat dropped into the water and floated away. To his sorrow, the old dog found that he was grabbing after a shadow.

SHADOWS OF TRUE HAPPINESS

Youth of the Church, there are many shadows of true happiness that you will be tempted to grab after, and I promise you that if you grab after them, you will be like that old dog. You will find that you have lost the good things that you now possess—happiness, the gospel, and probably eternal life—and you will receive in return only a shadow of true happiness. The things that I have in mind we call sins, all of the sins that we may commit. Remember that Alma, the ancient Nephite prophet, warned us that “wickedness never was happiness.” (Alma 41:10; Helaman 13:38.)

TOBACCO HABIT

There are three or four shadows of true happiness that I would like to point out briefly today. The first one of them is the use of tobacco. Every young man in the Church, and I am sorry to say that today every young woman in the Church also, is tempted and will continue to be tempted to take up the habit of tobacco. In fact your friends may already have taken up this habit. They may say to you: “Come on, take a smoke. It’s smart to smoke. It’s being a good sport to smoke. All important people smoke. Have a good time while you are young, and you can repent when you get old.” In fact they not only make these remarks but also put forth all sorts of other arguments to induce you to use tobacco.

Young people, youth of the Church, it is the devil that is talking through your friends to try to induce you to adopt that evil habit. He wants you to be unhappy. He desires to tear down your spiritual, physical, and mental life and to destroy your chances for a fullness of joy. For these reasons he is putting forth his strongest efforts to try to induce you to take up the tobacco habit.

NICOTINE A DEADLY POISON

Tobacco, as we all know, is very poisonous. It kills the body. In order to illustrate how deadly the poison is in tobacco, I would like to tell a story that took place in my own family when I was just leaving my teens. I had a sister who was at that time thirty-seven years old. She was the mother of seven children. On this occasion

her children had the whooping cough. She went one day with her husband down to the farm, about six or seven miles below town. Upon arriving there her husband found that he had to drive a cow home; and so he brought my sister up to a little store about four miles below town, left her there, and went back on his horse to the farm. When my sister went into the store, the lady back of the counter asked her how her children were getting along with the whooping cough. She replied, "Not very well." Then the lady picked up from the counter a bottle which was about half full of a black substance. The label on the bottle read, "Whooping Cough Medicine." The clerk said to my sister, "This is the best whooping cough medicine that I have ever seen. I don't have any in the store right now, but I can order some for you if you wish me to." Then she laid the bottle down and went to the telephone to call my sister's son for the purpose of having him come down to her store to drive the car and take his mother home.

My sister picked up the bottle, pulled out the cork, smelled the contents of the bottle and then took a taste. She said, "My this is nasty." Then she instantly fell over dead. The doctor was rushed to the scene. Upon examining the contents of the bottle, he declared it to be straight nicotine. He said that nicotine was one of the most deadly poisons that people could take and that the one swallow that my sister had taken had gone directly to her brain and had suddenly killed her.

Young people, that is the deadly poison that we take into our bodies when we smoke or chew tobacco.

Tobacco not only kills the body, but it kills the spirit—it kills spirituality. It is incompatible for a man holding the Holy Priesthood of God to use tobacco and to study the Bible or to use tobacco and to keep up his Church activities. Usually when he picks up the habit of tobacco he lays down the Holy Scriptures, he decreases his Church activities, and he becomes to a certain extent spiritually dead, which is the worst death that we can die.

God has given us the commandment that we should not kill. Youth of the Church, when we take poisons into our bodies knowingly we are to a certain extent breaking this great law.

THE DRINKING HABIT

Another shadow of true happiness which I would like to mention today is more damaging in its effects than is the habit of tobacco. It is the habit of drinking liquor. Elder Joseph F. Merrill has already graphically described the bad effects of alcohol and so I will be very brief on this subject.

It is my honest opinion that the devil has never discovered or invented a tool outside of liquor which is more destructive to the human soul. He has no other tool which can bring human beings down into misery, poverty, and degradation, which can cause corruption, and which can cause people to commit all other kinds of

sins more than by having them use liquor. People when they get drunk are not in their right minds. In other words, they are crazy. While under the influence of liquor, the moral controls of men and women are relaxed, and they commit many sins that they would not otherwise do, such as adultery and murder. I know, youth of the Church, that the devil puts it into the hearts of wicked men to give our lovely girls liquor and get them drunk in order that they might rob them of their virtue.

In referring to alcohol, Robert G. Ingersoll said:

It murders the soul; it is the sum of all villainy, the father of all crime, the mother of all abominations, the devil's best friend, and God's worst enemy. (Editorial, Church Section, *Deseret News*, September 27, 1947.)

Today I call upon all the youth of the Church to make a resolution that you will never take a smoke. If you already have taken one, that you will never take another one. That you will never take a drop of liquor in any form. If you have already done so, that you will repent and resolve today that as long as you live you will never take another drop of liquor. I promise you that if you will make this resolution and never break it that you will be happy throughout this life and throughout eternity, because you have kept your bodies clean.

SEX IMMORALITY

A third shadow of true happiness I would like to point out is even worse than the other two. It is sex immorality. I firmly believe that there is no sin that human beings commit that causes a loss of happiness, that causes the people to be degraded more completely, that breaks up homes more thoroughly, that ruins love more permanently, that drives out the Spirit of God and causes apostasy from the true Church more definitely than does the sin of sex immorality.

All the way through history the prophets of God have taught the value of virtue. In fact, you and I can still hear the voice of God crying down from Mt. Sinai to Moses,

Thou shalt not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14.)

Alma, the great Nephite prophet, told his son, Corianton, who had had an illicit association with the harlot Isabel, the following:

Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost? (Alma 39:5.)

The prophets in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Presidents of the Church from the beginning down to the present time, have declared that our virtue is as valuable to us as is our life, and we should guard our virtue with our life.

More than a hundred years ago the Lord revealed the following to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

And verily I say unto you, as I have said before, he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear.

Wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whore-monger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Verily I say, that they shall not have part in the first resurrection. . . .

But unto him that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life. (D. & C. 63:16-18, 23.)

BODIES ARE TEMPLES OF GOD

Youth of the Church, again I call upon you to make a resolution that you will keep your bodies clean and pure in every respect. Obey all the words that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, living all the principles of the gospel to the best of your ability in order that you might be happy. Do these things in order that you might have that joy which God wishes you to have. Remember at all times that your bodies are temples of God, as Paul, the ancient apostle, has said:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (I Corinthians 3:16, 17.)

If we will do all these things as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, most of the youth of the Church in due time will have the privilege of going into the house of the Lord with the one of his or her choice and there be married not only for life but also for all eternity, and the children which are born under that covenant shall be theirs forever. These blessings, however, are predicated on a continuance of righteous living.

BLESSINGS PROMISED TO RIGHTEOUS

When the great judgment day comes, and when all men and women who have been true and faithful in all things stand before the judgment seat of God the Eternal Father and Jesus the Christ to give an account of their actions, words, and thoughts, while in mortality, it shall be said unto them,

Well done my beloved servants, enter ye into your exaltation. Receive your life eternal.

And at that day this great scripture which was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith shall be fulfilled:

. . . and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. [And the Prophet Joseph Smith said that promise meant to have the power to beget spirit children.]

Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.

For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me. (D. & C. 132:19-22.)

This is life eternal, my brothers and sisters. This is the exaltation which the gospel of Jesus Christ promises those who love God and keep his commandments.

I humbly pray to our Father in heaven that he will bless the youth of the Church that they might live clean and pure in every way, walking righteously and undefiled before God, that they might receive this great exaltation of life eternal, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President George Albert Smith:

Lest I forget, I call your attention to the fact that there is a beautiful monument now placed on the north side of the Tabernacle, the monument portraying the coming of the Handcart companies.

When conference commenced I referred to the fact that we had a distinguished visitor with us who is a grandson of Thomas L. Kane. I stand here to say that I know of no one man who more willingly gave of himself and his means for the blessing and the preservation of the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints than did Colonel Thomas L. Kane. About ninety years ago when Johnston's army was on its way here for the avowed purpose of driving our people again, that great man, for he was a great man, without any encouragement, so far as I know, from the membership of the Church, made a long trip and came to this country and was the means of holding back the army until the falsehoods that had been circulated about the Church had been made known, and our people were not compelled again to take to the wilderness.

Brother Frank Evans, who for many years has been prominent among us in various capacities—the President of the Eastern States Mission at one time—I think is as familiar with the story of Thomas L. Kane as any of us, and after ninety years I felt it would be an appropriate thing to have portrayed before us by Brother Evans the life of that great and good man whose grandson is visiting with us at the present time. I hope he feels that he is more than welcome.

Brother Frank Evans.