

we cherish it and practise it in our lives, then victory over error will be ours from the smallest household in Zion to the farthest outpost of Zion, wherever that may be. Thus through the restoration of the gospel in our day, the whole world shall be blessed.

May the Lord bless us and fill us with an understanding of this mighty work laid out for us in these latter days and make us able to do the Lord's work, which we can do if we are faithful, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers and the congregation sang the hymn, "Praise to the Man."

### ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I earnestly pray, my brothers and sisters, that while I stand here the Spirit of the Lord will be with me because indeed it is a frightening thing to stand before so many people, and I realize my great need of help.

#### PRESIDENT GEORGE F. RICHARDS

I have missed in this conference the genial presence of President George F. Richards. I would like you to know that I, as one of the members of his Council, was very, very grateful for the privilege of serving under his leadership. I regard him as a truly great man—a great soul—a great leader. I am sure that no one had a more firm faith in the Almighty than did President Richards. I am sure that he was an inspired man of God, and I would like to say to you that I, along with the other members of the Council, loved that man deeply; and today, together with the rest of you, I miss his presence here.

#### STORY OF A FRIEND

I would like to tell you a story about a friend of mine whom I shall call Bill, for the sake of anonymity. During Bill's last year at school, he met a lovely young woman named Helen. They became very good friends, and it wasn't very long until they began to talk about the possibility of their getting married.

During that same last year of school Bill fell in with a group of fellows who were known as the most popular group on the campus. They taught Bill some bad habits.

When Helen first saw Bill with a cigaret in his mouth, it nearly broke her heart. She talked with him and pleaded with him, but he felt that smoking cigarets was one of the things that went with the popularity of this group on the campus. So her pleadings brought no results. Helen began to wonder if she should stay with Bill or

not, whether she should allow their courtship to end in marriage. She wanted to be married in the temple, and she knew that if Bill continued to smoke cigarets they would not get to the temple.

When graduation time came, Bill offered a formal proposal to Helen and asked her to set the date of their wedding. She thought it over long and seriously. She loved Bill a very great deal and did not like the idea of losing him. But neither did she like the idea of marrying a smoking man, one who could not take her into the temple where she had wanted to go.

After some days' consideration, Helen finally came to the conclusion that when school was out, Bill would be separated from this group of boys and that possibly, if she married him, under her influence he might leave off the bad habits which he had acquired and get back into activity in the Church. And then, probably within a year or so, they could go to the temple together; so she consented, and they were married by her bishop in her living room at home.

A year or so went by, and a lovely baby boy was born to them. They called him John. In due time another boy was born to them. They called him James, but he was soon known as Jim.

Bill loved his two boys, and every night after he came home from work, he would play with them and have just a grand time. He would hold them way above his head and laugh at them and talk to them, and they would laugh back. Then he would bring them down and hug them to him.

This show of affection made Helen very happy, but Bill played with them while he had a cigaret in his mouth, and when Helen saw those little baby hands reach out for that smoldering white thing between Bill's lips, her heart sank, and she began to wonder what that example might mean in the future lives of those boys.

Years went by. John became twenty years of age and was called on a mission. He was thrilled with the call and so was his mother. Bill—well, on the night of the farewell testimonial, Bill sat on the stand with his wife and son and he was just about as proud as any father could be, because John was really a remarkably fine young man.

About three weeks after John's departure for his mission, Bill was sitting one evening in front of the big, open fireplace in the living room reading the evening paper and smoking a cigaret. While he was doing so, in came Jim, a young man by this time. Jim said, "Hi, Dad."

Without looking up from his paper, Bill said, "Hello, Son. How are you?"

"I'm fine, Dad. I want to ask you a question."

"All right, Son, what is it?"

"What's the best brand of cigarets?"

Bill stiffened in his chair. For a moment it seemed as if he were frozen there. Then his hands relaxed, and the paper slipped from

his fingers and fell to the floor. He flipped his cigaret over into the open fire and then stood up and faced his son.

He said, "Jim, you cannot start to smoke."

"But I have started already, and I want to know what is the best brand of cigarets?"

"Son, I am telling you," Bill said, "you cannot start to smoke."

"Well, why not, Dad? You've smoked as long as I can remember, and it hasn't hurt you any. I've watched you."

Those last words Jim spoke cut into Bill's heart. "I've watched you. I've watched you." Then Helen was right, Bill thought to himself. All these years Helen had told him that his cigaret habit—the example he was holding before his sons—would result like this, and he had never believed her. Now Helen was right. Here was Jim saying, "I've watched you. I've watched you."

Then Bill felt a consciousness of guilt, a note of self-accusation, and there were words going through his mind saying, "I taught him. I taught him. I taught him."

Bill shook himself and walked over to his son and took hold of both shoulders and looked him square in the eye and said, "Son, you say these cigarets didn't ever hurt me. And you say you've watched me. I want you to know that these cigarets have done me more harm than anything else in my life. Nothing has hurt me, nothing has handicapped me so much as these cigarets. Why, I'd give anything that I own if I had never started to use them, and I don't want to see the same handicaps come to you. Why, Jim, these cigarets have raised a barrier between me and happiness right here in my own home, and they have caused your mother many hours of weeping. I know that, and I don't want you to undertake a habit of this kind."

He talked so earnestly and so unusually that Jim at first thought that his Dad was putting on an act and told him so. Again Bill began to talk and plead with his son never to smoke again, to get rid of this habit that he had just begun.

Then Jim, realizing that his dad was really serious, said, "Well, Dad, if this cigaret habit is so bad, why haven't you quit?"

Bill said, "I've tried to quit. I've tried many times, but I have never been able to—the habit is too strong. I'm just like a slave to this cigaret and I don't want you to become a slave. Now, Son, cut it out."

Jim said, "Well, Dad, you see all the fellows I go with—they all smoke. They'll think I'm a sissy. I couldn't face those fellows and tell them I wasn't going to smoke any more. They are the most popular crowd I know."

Bill said, "Popular or not, stop this habit and if necessary get a new crowd. Find new friends who don't smoke, but let cigarets alone."

Jim said, "Well, I don't know whether I can do that or not. I'll have to think this over."

Then his dad said, "Jim, I'll make a bargain with you. If you'll quit smoking, I'll quit."

Jim, quick as a flash said, "Well, Dad, you just told me you couldn't quit. Are you trying to lead me along?"

Bill's answer to that was that he walked over to the fireplace, put his hand in his pocket, pulled out the package of cigarets and the folder of matches, and threw them into the open fireplace. Then he turned around and faced his son and said, "Son, I've quit. I'm all through. Now, will you do the same thing?"

"Well I don't know, Dad, I've got to think this over," Jim said. "I'll tell you in the morning."

That night Bill couldn't sleep. He rolled and tossed in bed as long as he could stand it and then got up and went into the living room and closed the door. He didn't turn on the lights. He just walked the floor there in the dark. Jim's words kept going through his head, "I've watched you. I've watched you," followed by his own sense of self-accusation, "I taught him. I taught him."

It had been a long time since Bill had said a prayer. He had left that pretty much with Helen. But this night he wanted more than anything else to have Jim quit smoking; so there in the darkness and the stillness of his home he slipped down on his knees and began to pray. He poured out his soul to the Lord and told him all of his faults and shortcomings, confessed all of his sins to the Lord—the first time he'd ever done that. Then he told the Lord about Jim and their conversation of the evening.

He didn't pray with much faith. The cigarets had pretty well weakened what faith he had, but he did pray from a sense of fear—fear for the future of that boy; and from a sense of love—love for a son for whom he would give his own life, if necessary. But it seemed like asking a great deal of the Lord to erase in one night an example which he had held before his son ever since that son was a tiny baby.

At last morning came. Bill slowly climbed the stairs up to Jim's room and went in and sat down on the edge of the bed. He put one hand on Jim's shoulder. Jim turned over, and Bill said, "Son, what's your answer?"

Jim looked up into his dad's tired face and sleepless eyes and said, "Dad, I surely don't want to hurt your feelings, but the fellows—I couldn't face them. I guess I won't quit. I'll wait awhile."

Deeply disappointed but without saying another word, Bill got up and walked slowly out of the room. He felt like he had been whipped. But he was more than ever determined to keep his own resolution. He would never go back to his cigarets.

The next Sunday he went to Church, the first time in years. He went again the next Sunday and the next, and he continued to go and enjoyed it.

About a year afterwards the bishop came to him one day and said, "Bill, how would you like to be ordained an elder?"

A lump came into Bill's throat, and his eyes filled with tears as he took hold of the bishop's hand and said, "Bishop, do you mean that at last I can take Helen to the temple?"

The bishop squeezed his hand and said, "Yes, Bill, at last you can take Helen to the temple."

Another year went by, and John came home from his mission. One day when John and his father were alone together, John went over and put his arm around his dad and said, "Dad, I want you to know how deeply grateful I am to you for the wonderful thing you have done. You know, as a boy I always used to think that my dad was just about perfect, and I guess every boy thinks that his dad is the greatest man in the world. But every time you took a cigaret, it hurt me deep inside. I knew you had a weakness you couldn't control. But now, Dad, all that is over, and I want you to know how grateful I am to you."

But what about Jim? Well, Jim is married now and has a little boy of his own, and he comes home at night and plays with this boy just as Bill used to play with Jim. And when Jim gets his own little son up in his arms, that little baby, just as his father did, reaches out for that smoldering white thing between his dad's lips.

The other day I rode home on the bus with Bill, and he was telling me how happy he is in his new life. And then he told me about Jim, and said that if nearly twenty years of a bad example would put Jim where he now is, possibly another twenty years of a good example might bring him back to where he ought to be. And I thought, "God bless you, Bill."

And God bless all other men like him in the wonderful struggle they are making for the right.

And God bless Jim and all other boys like him that they may recognize tobacco for what it is—a narcotic which enslaves human beings and helps to destroy their faith in God. This is my prayer, in Jesus' name. Amen.

### ELDER FRANCIS A. CHILD

*Formerly President of the Western States Mission*

My dear brethren and sisters, Brother Clifford Young said that it is a challenge to any man to stand before this audience. I bear my humble testimony that to a Child it's more than that.

Sister Child and I are very appreciative and thankful for the call we received to preside over one of the great missions of the Church. We arrived in Denver in December of '45 to take charge of the Western States Mission. You remember that that was following the war and we had, to begin with, just nineteen missionaries. They were pretty well scattered over that vast area, but we felt that the Lord would bless us if we would apply ourselves to the work. We asked the Lord to bless our labors, but we can't expect him to bless