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THE SEVENTY ARE traditionally minute-men. I have just been multiplied.

Under the stimulation of the great song we have sung together, I should like to put into the record a story and a statement which I think President McKay probably does not know of, but which I think should be known to him and to all of us.

In the last few years it has been my occasional blessing to take distinguished visitors to our city, who have come to Temple Square, into the offices of the President of the Church to greet him, to be greeted by him, and to feel the strength and stimulation and love which always emanates from him.

A few months ago Brother Evans and I with some others were privileged to attend a conference in the office of President McKay with one of the leading labor leaders in America, possibly as influential and important a man as there is in his field. He was accompanied by his wife and two little daughters, and the experience was a beautiful and impressive one. There was no posturing, no pretense or effort to impress by President McKay—only genuine friendliness, interest, and love. The part of the story I would want remembered and on the record was what occurred when we had left the office. We stood in the halls of the Church Office Building, and this man, who in his employment and administration influences the lives of many millions of men, said to those of us who stood with him, and he said it with a moist eye, "I have lived in many lands. I have been in the presence of kings and presidents and rulers, and I want to say to you men that I do not think our generation will produce another character like that."

This has happened not once, but many times. And for no other purpose than to express my own faith and convictions about President McKay and the office and calling which he holds, I repeat to you who may not have enjoyed such privilege my observation that many men who are good and stalwart and powerful in their own right recognize in him who leads us a great man and

an authorized representative of our Heavenly Father.

There have been many things in this conference which have inspired sincere gratitude in me. With no desire to be lengthy I would like to express my appreciation for the return to the measure of health which they enjoy of our two good Brethren in the Council of the Seventy. We have learned to love and respect Brother Kirkham and Brother Hunter and feel for them the esteem and brotherhood which this wonderful service opportunity should engender in us.

I would like humbly to express another feeling of gratitude. There sits in this building today a man who was among the very first to whom I bore testimony of the gospel on these grounds when I came out of the service eleven years ago. He is here today as a bishop of a ward in one of the great new stakes in the Church. Having been touched with the spirit of the gospel on Temple Square, he, through his own earnest efforts, through the effective teaching of good missionaries and the living of the gospel by the members of the Church in his home town, soon came to a knowledge of the truth and accepted it.

It is a privilege also to express gratitude for the magnificent music which we have enjoyed here. The Tabernacle Choir is known to the whole Church as a great missionary organization, and yet perhaps we who work on these grounds are more aware, through our opportunities, of their effectiveness than others could be. I honor them. During this conference we have heard two other groups—a wonderful choir of young singers from Brigham Young University, and a great, and to me thrilling, group of young people from the Institute of Religion at the University of Utah.

I have great love for these young people, and I desire to express publicly my appreciation for the privilege of having been a teacher of some of them. I would like to say how proud I was of the group from the Institute of Religion. They have not had the privilege of singing here before and of being thus excellently represented before the

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Church. Anything fine that can be said of other young men and women in the Church can properly be said of them, for they are intelligent and loyal and steadfast. Not all of you would understand the pressures that are upon them in their daily learning. I want to express my gratitude and faith and confidence in the good men who teach them, some of whom also taught me, and I express my own appreciation for the great contribution in faith and good lives that has come out of that institute and others like it.

There are a few simple suggestions I would like to make today to these who are young.

Some weeks ago it was my privilege to go into one of the great subterranean caverns in the southwestern part of our land. Thousands upon thousands of people visit it annually. The day I went into it, far below the surface of the earth, I was in the company of a large group, but no one whom I knew personally. The path on which we walked through this great cavern over a period of more than an hour was quite a narrow one, permitting two to walk abreast, if a bit crowded. The trail was lighted in sections as we went and was very clearly marked with white stones at the edges and with signs all along the way. We were accompanied by three forest rangers and met others as we went. I walked near the front and heard some of the comments of the ranger as we were led into the magnificent scenery of this underground wonderland.

As we walked, we passed beneath a huge, high dome. Below it, appropriately named, was a deep hole called "The Bottomless Pit." There was conjecture among the people as to what might have caused this empty place in the earth. Some thought it might have been an early fossil deposit, others an area of highly soluble materials, others the result of an earth movement or some other like occurrence of nature. It was discussed for a time with no conclusion reached. The ranger informed the party that there is divided opinion on the question among the experts.

A little farther along the trail we came into an area where there was another vast vaulted dome, but the

debris from that cavity lay below it in a mountainous pile. Again there were comments along the trail. One said: "My, I'll bet there was a tremendous clap of noise when that fell!" An army man replied, "Do you really think there was? After all, there was no one here to hear it!"

They discussed this issue at some length, whether or not in the absence of someone to hear, noise actually occurs. I listened and said nothing, but thought of Bishop Berkeley, Irish philosopher, whose theory was that "to be is to be perceived," that is, that so-called material things exist only in being perceived—if it is not perceived, it does not exist. It is said that a group of the bishop's students at Oxford taught him the true nature of reality one very dark evening when they placed a tree stump on a certain unlighted path where he habitually walked. His perception of the stump was said to be a realistic shock to George Berkeley. (Laughter.)

Well, when we left the cavern, the people were still discussing whether or not when things fall there is a noise in the absence of human ears to hear it.

As I left the cavern, I thought to myself that these may be legitimate fields for inquiry, and it may be that someday someone will discover the answers, though that seems doubtful. But would it not be a most foolish thing to abandon the cave because we do not know the answers? Suppose someone should take it into his mind that all the glory of this wonder-work, God's handiwork, should be abandoned and never enjoyed more because those mysterious questions were not answered. Suppose one with ready access to the place and with personal knowledge of its great beauty should decide that he would never enter more because there were things he did not fully understand about it—or go about seeking to dissuade others from enjoying the majesty of it because it took effort to reach and there were certain (to him, here and now) hard-to-understand problems. Would not this be foolish and tragic?

Do you know that some of our wonderful young people of great potential intelligence and capacity and contribution are abandoning their faith and

their way of life in the gospel, with all the strength and beauty of it, because they have come to questions for which they have not learned satisfactory answers?

May I read you a statement from the pen of one of the most learned among us, who left us a legacy of scientific research and useful knowledge, and of great faith. Dr. Widtsoe, after encouraging "mature examination," said:

"Wise men do not throw the Church overboard because they have not satisfied themselves concerning every principle of the gospel. Under the law of progression every principle may in time find lodgment in the inner consciousness of the seeker."

To abandon the marvelous demonstrable truths of the gospel because there are some questions one cannot satisfactorily resolve would be foolishness in the extreme. As President Clark said the other evening, "A foolish man can ask questions that the wisest cannot answer." It is no reproach to our religion or to us not to be able to answer definitively, categorically, finally, every question that can be asked. I plead with you, and I talk not theoretically but with some of your faces in my mind, not to abandon all that is good in your religion because there are some things you do not understand.

Now, President Clark in his two great sermons in the evening meetings, Brother Evans in his conference address and in this morning's wonderful short sermon, and President Richards this morning, have all alluded in some measure to something I would now like to say. I could not presume to add to what they have said, but I can raise my voice with them and testify as to my own experience and observation. What I say I say humbly, knowing my own limitations, and not from any position of personal arrogance or assumed unusual competence. I would speak to some who influence these young people in causing them to abandon what they believe.

Along the trail down in the cavern, well-marked and defined as it was, with signs and guides to make clear that we were to stay on it, some "boy play" occurred between some young Scouts in uniform who walked the trail just a short distance behind me, supervised by

a scoutmaster and several assistants. The boys were jostling and pushing each other all the way along, trying to get some adventurous, "progressive" soul to get off the trail and go out and explore a little. I watched it all and observed the instance I now think of, when a larger boy who had been tantalizing a younger one, pushed him off the trail and into a dimly lighted, muddy area. The boy went near the edge of a crevice, and with an outcry that startled us all and got the rangers quickly to his side, signalized the danger he was in and the possibility that he might have perished in the darkness.

You see, along this trail at periodic intervals the ranger would stop and bend over and turn a switch which was hidden from the view of the rest of us, and an area ahead of us would suddenly become lighted. The ranger at the back, when we were safely through a certain area, would turn off the light. The youngster had gone into a section of the cave where the light did not reach.

I thought, as the lights went on and off, how realistic this experience is to life. We talk of questions, some solvable. We know that the Lord has encouraged us to seek truth, to "knock," "ask," and "search diligently." Yet there come times when we reach the end of our capacity to reason and to understand. We must learn to walk by faith. There has been given us enough light to walk the paths we are here to tread. As the Lord in his wisdom desires that we have more light, we have the assurance that it will be given. I bear my witness that from the beginning of the history of the Church the lights have come on when the need arose. It has always been so; it is so now; it will always be.

When the little boy was brought back on the trail, the ranger was very angry, chastised him severely, declared him banished from the group, and started to send him away, while the real culprit in the case stood silent. He was not going to be punished, just the boy. Then the scoutmaster spoke up and said, "If he goes, this boy ought to go, too." He was a wise man. The ranger talked to them both for a moment, and on promise of good behavior, allowed both of

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them to stay. Though God and wise men may forgive, there is no happiness to be found in leaving the narrow path of gospel principle to adventure in strange paths and forbidden ways, in the enticement of dark places, in "looking beyond the mark," as Jacob said.

We left the cavern a while later. My teacher's mind and my interest in youth had brought me to some renewed conclusions, and I pass them on earnestly to mature persons who are given to assisting young people off the trail. The dictionary has a word for them: *iconoclast*. It is defined as, "One who attacks cherished beliefs as shams." What if the cherished beliefs that are attacked along the trail are true? What if they are the very beliefs that make these boys and girls the worthwhile, promising people they are? What if the foundations of their faith are effectively shaken at this crucial period, and they dangle, with no substantial footings to stand on? President McKay in his opening address quoted the economist, Babson, from whose writings I should now like to read a sentence:

"Many of the most important men in America, who are what they are because of what they learned at their mother's knee, now deny their own and other people's children those same blessings, in the name of 'liberalism' or 'progressivism' or 'emancipation.'"

Such men, Babson says, deny others the very blessings that made them what they are.

Do you know that when one who has influence with youth, be he teacher, leader, or parent, seriously weakens the foundations upon which a young person has built, by faith-destroying challenges the youngster is not yet equipped to meet, he fashions a disciple who has been effectively cut loose from fundamentals at a time when he needs most to rely on them? The challenger may himself be a moral, educated, well-meaning person of integrity, doing what he does in the name of honesty and truth. His own character may have been formed in an atmosphere of faith and conviction which through his influence he may now help to destroy in his young follower. "Disenchanted" himself in his mature years, he turns his powers on an immature mind and leaves

it ready prey for nostrums and superstitions and behavior he himself would disdain.

Let me ask a question or two, as I hurry to a conclusion. To you who influence this boy, to "emancipate" him, in your way of thinking, may I ask you: Have you really helped him develop his capacity to contribute to the world's useful knowledge and useful work? In which particular is he a better person when you get through with him? In what aspect of life has his ability to serve been strengthened? Does he love God and his fellow men more? Is he a more moral, clean, virtuous, decent man? Is he a more faithful husband, father, or son? Has he learned more gratefully to honor his father and mother? Does he merit their increased respect and esteem as he matures? Is his power for good increased? Has he acquired a greater influence for motivating others to constructive, participating citizenship? Is he a more worthy, admirable person to his younger brothers and sisters? Has he experienced increase of generosity, unselfishness, thoughtfulness for the needs of others through your tutelage? Is he more kind, considerate, gentle, sensitive? Does he have more sympathy, love, and understanding for those who are distressed? Does he live life more courageously, manfully? Will he endure tribulation more patiently and understandingly because of you?

I have answers to these questions. Again I do not talk from theory but with faces and lives in my mind. My experience is that when you get through with him, as fine a man as you are, as much respect as I may have for your education and your brilliance and your effectiveness and your personal integrity, you have not improved him in any of these important ways. He may be, in fact, he often is, cynical, destructively critical, vain, high-minded, impervious to instruction. Quite often he has acquired habits and attitudes toward society and moral behavior which break the hearts of those who love him most and which you yourself would never stoop to. He sneers at his parents, those whom he once respected, and often at God and holy things. It is quite a responsibility you have assumed.

May I commend to you what Richard L. Evans said this morning: "A teacher is responsible for the total effect of his teaching." So is it true of a parent, an official, a leader of youth. What is the total effect of your influence on the young?

I want to mention one other thought that came in the cavern. As we walked in that subterranean beauty, I thought what each of you under like circumstances would have thought. I thought how wonderful it would be if my lovely wife and little girls could be with me; I wanted to share with them the wonder, the inspiration, the nearness to God I felt then. A verse of scripture came to mind. It is recorded in First Nephi:

And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen.

And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceeding great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; . . . (1 Nephi 8:11-12.)

We should all desire to share the goodness and beauty and truth of the gospel with others of God's children.

In the story of Ammon's missionary work among the Lamanites there is one statement the unusual language of which sometimes evokes mirth in a student when he first hears it, but which to me is one of the most sacred and provocative verses in all the record. The king has been stricken and lies as if he were dead. Ammon is summoned by the queen, his loving, loyal wife. She says:

. . . I would that ye should go in and see my husband, for he has been laid upon his bed for the space of two days and two nights; and some say that he is not dead, but others say that he is dead and that he

stinketh, and that he ought to be placed in the sepulchre; but as for myself, to me he doth not stink. (Alma 19:5.)

The love of this faithful wife for her beloved husband seems typical to me of the love which will obtain in the heavenly kingdom and which should here characterize our relationships with those dear to us.

I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will guide the young people of the Church as they seek answers to their questions, for this is encouraged, that they may seek "by study and also by faith"; that they may with dedication and honest effort seek for useful knowledge, for the Lord has said that "to be learned is good," if we hearken to the counsels of God.

I caution those who influence young people, and ask you to look at the total effect of your teaching. I bear my witness as to the truthfulness of the message of the Prophet Joseph in his testimony of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the restoration, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder Marion D. Hanks, member of the First Council of Seventy.

There are two other members of the General Authorities from whom we should be pleased to hear, but in consideration of their health we will refrain from calling on them. They are Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve, and Elder Thomas E. McKay of the Assistants. We assure them they have, and they know they have, our faith and prayers for the blessings of the Lord to attend them and to give them strength, vitality, wherein they may now be suffering from physical weakness.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

AT THE CONCLUSION of this great conference, I am sure you would have me express appreciation to all who have contributed to it, including those who have so inspired us with their uplifting sermons. I shall repeat, of course,

some expressions which we have already given directly at the time of service.

You have been blessed by the sight of these beautiful flowers, so profusely displayed before you—the calla lilies from the high priests' quorum of the