

calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter." (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 3:380.)

As I contemplate the foregoing admonition and testimony of Peter, I can readily understand why the Prophet Joseph said that "Peter penned the most sublime language of any of the apostles." (*HC*, 5:392.)

By way of conclusion and in the words of Paul to Timothy, "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the [laying] on of . . . hands" (2 Tim. 1:6), and may God grant that we may all so believe that we are what we profess to be as priesthood holders, that neither storm

nor calm can drive us from our duty. I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Brother Jerold Ottley will now direct the congregation and choir in singing "Redeemer of Israel."

The hymn, "Redeemer of Israel," was sung by the congregation and choir.

President Kimball

We shall now appreciate hearing from President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency.

President N. Eldon Tanner

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Brethren, it is a great and glorious sight to see all these priesthood holders gathered here in this historic Tabernacle and to realize that thousands and thousands have gathered in other buildings throughout the Church—men who hold the priesthood of God with power and authority to act in his name. All of us want to be actively engaged in helping to build the kingdom of God and be prepared to answer the clarion call of our president, Spencer W. Kimball, a prophet of God, through whom the Lord speaks and directs his work here upon the earth.

Whenever I stand before a body of priesthood holders, I feel a very heavy responsibility and do hope and humbly pray that the Spirit and blessings of the Lord will attend us and guide our thinking while I speak to you.

Blessings of church membership

I often wonder if we really realize what a great privilege and blessing it is to be members of the church of Jesus Christ and to hold the priesthood of God, and to know that we are the only people in the whole world who have this great blessing and privilege.

We must never forget that this privilege carries with it a heavy responsibility which must be assumed by every one of us, from President Kimball to the last deacon ordained in the Church. Let us never weaken or forget that we have been called by the Lord. He expects all of us to honor the priesthood and magnify our calling.

We have heard, are hearing, and will continue to hear much about the evils in the world today. They are real

and very serious. In fact, they have almost engulfed the world. I am sure many of you are tired of hearing about it, as I am, and feel that we are listening to a broken record.

Talk to BYU graduates

Let me read some excerpts from a talk given by Dr. John A. Howard, president of Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois, as he spoke to the graduates of Brigham Young University last April. He referred to the problems and sacrifices made by our early pioneers who crossed the plains to the Salt Lake Valley and said:

"The work that faces your generation is no less arduous. The deserts you must bring to blossom are no less arid, but your mission may demand even more of you, for unlike the early pioneers of this state you are confronted by a wilderness which is subtle and fluid and elusive. Indeed the wilderness which you must conquer is *disguised as a civilization* so that there is the *double necessity to unmask the deceit, to distinguish between what is authentic and what is counterfeit, and to labor to support the one and oppose the other.*

"The moral depravity which appears on television is rivaled by the moral tone of campuses where cohabitation is commonplace and where the use of illegal drugs doesn't even raise an eyebrow anymore. 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.

"It may be difficult for your generation to conceive what this society was like a scant ten years ago. *Gutter* language was almost unknown on public platform and in plays and movies. Co-

educational dormitories were unthinkable *anywhere* in this country. Most people had no worry walking out alone late at night in the city streets. Salacious literature was not publicly available on the newsstands or bawdy cards available in the lobby of the local motel, nor was salacious literature available in the bookstores publicly."

He also said: "I believe there is no single large group of your generation in the United States as consistently trained in its religious obligations, as ready to work long hours and make sacrifices for its principles, and as well versed in the dignity of self-reliance as you are. If that estimate is correct, you are greatly blessed and highly privileged."

This is a great compliment to Brigham Young University. Remember that it is given by a nonmember of the Church who is president of another university and is acquainted with the conditions in the world today and is qualified to speak on this subject. He has clearly pointed out what the responsibilities of BYU are.

Strength of BYU

After reading his talk, I immediately asked myself, "What has put Brigham Young University in this strong position?" I should like to suggest three or four reasons for the university being what it is.

First, it was established under the direction of the priesthood of God and continues to function under the influence of that priesthood, with the president and most of the faculty being made up of men and women who have strong testimonies of the gospel, who know who they are, where they came from, and why they are here, and who are prepared and anxious to teach the principles of the restored gospel by precept and example.

Second, most students who attend the university have been taught these same principles in their homes, and to understand that they are spirit children

of God and how they can prepare themselves to go back into his presence.

Third, through the Church organizations and the example of the officers and teachers, the youth receive great strength as they are growing up and they benefit greatly as they participate as officers and teachers and members of the branches and stakes on the university campus.

Fourth, the great strength of the returned missionaries, with their strong testimonies and experiences, contributes much to the religious atmosphere on the campus.

Responsibility of Church

Before going farther, I wish to take this opportunity to sound what I think to be a most important warning, and that is that neither the university nor the Church, nor we as individuals, adopt the attitude that we have arrived, that we are saved, that we need not repent, that we need not continue to try to improve and live more closely and completely the teachings of the gospel.

If what Dr. Howard said about the responsibility of BYU students is true—and it is—it applies even more to the Church, its officers, and its members. As mentioned before, this is the church of Jesus Christ, the only church led by and holding the priesthood of God, and it has been given the charge to teach the gospel to all people and prepare them for the second coming of Christ. This can be done only as we honor the priesthood of God and magnify the office and calling which has been given to us individually.

Evils of the world

It is evident that we must put forth greater effort as a church and as individuals if we are to withstand the evils of the world. The First Presidency and General Authorities are greatly concerned about the fact that evil and temptation are reaching into the Church

and affecting the lives of many of our youth and even adult members. It nearly breaks our hearts to see how many and how seriously they are being affected. We realize that the worth of a soul is great in the sight of the Lord, and we want to do all in our power through love and kindness and warning to help strengthen and guide all members in the paths of truth and righteousness. We feel as Nephi did when "iniquity had come upon the Nephites . . . and . . . his heart was swollen with sorrow within his breast; and he did exclaim in the agony of his soul." (Hel. 7:6.) Our concern is—and it should be the concern of every family, every father, every adult, and every priesthood holder—how can we best guard and protect ourselves and our children and others against the evils of the world?

Parable of Elder Talmage

Let me refer to and sort of paraphrase "The Parable of the Defective Battery," written by Elder James E. Talmage. (See Albert L. Zobell, Jr., *The Parable of James E. Talmage*, Deseret Book Company, 1973, pp. 7-12.) He said that in order to carry out a certain laboratory experiment he needed a powerful primary electric current. He asked his assistant to prepare a battery consisting of a dozen cells of simple type. His assistant followed the usual procedure. He prepared twelve jars containing acid solution, in which were immersed a pair of plates, one of carbon and one of zinc. The cells were then connected "in series." This should have resulted in the series giving out strength equal to the total force. It was discovered, however, that he had not given sufficient attention to details—those *seeming trifles* that *make or mar* perfection.

Elder Talmage said he was disappointed when he tried to use the battery because it was not functioning as it should. As he inspected it he found that

the cells were not all working alike; some of them were intensely active, and the liquid seemed to be like boiling water because of the escaping gases. Its current was very weak. The energy from it was practically used up in overcoming its own internal resistance, and it had no power.

He took the battery apart and made an individual examination of each cell. The first eight cells proved to be in good condition. The ninth, however, was seriously at fault. This cell was set aside and the others tested and found to be good. It was plain to see that number nine cell was the cause of the trouble. It was the one, too, that had been fuming and fussing more than the others. Leaving it out, he hooked up the other eleven and found them to form a good, strong current, ample to operate an electric receiver or to fire a blast on the opposite side of the globe.

Later he began to inspect the rejected unit and found that it had short-circuited itself through its foaming and fuming. The acid had destroyed the insulation in some parts, and the current was wholly used up in destructive corrosion within the jar. It had *violated the law of right action*. It had *corrupted itself* in its defective state. It was not only worthless as a working unit, but an *unproductive member* in a *community of cells*. It was worse than worthless in that it caused an effective resistance in the operation of the other clean and serviceable units.

He did not destroy the unit, however. He thought there was a possibility of restoring it to some usefulness. He searched its innermost parts and with knife and file removed the corroded crustment. He baptized it in a cleansing bath and set it up again and tried it out. Gradually it developed energy until it came to work almost as well as the other cells. However, he continued to watch the cell with special care, not trusting it as fully as he had before it had defiled itself.

Application to life

Elder Talmage said this was an actual experience, but he called it a parable and said how much we are like the voltaic cell. There are men who are loud and demonstrative, even offensive in their abnormal activity. Yet what do they accomplish in effective labor? Their energy is wholly consumed in overcoming the *internal resistance* of their *defective selves*.

There are others who do but sleep and dream. They are slothful, dormant, and, as judged by the standard of utility, dead. There are men who labor so quietly as scarcely to reveal the fact that they are hard at work. Through their earnest devotion they greatly influence the lives of those with whom they associate. *The unclean cell, however, was much like the sinner. Unfitness* was the direct effect of internal disorder, self-corruption. Such a defection in men we call sin, which is essentially the breaking of the law. They, in association with others who are clean, able, and willing, are an obstruction to the current, and the efficiency of the whole is lessened, if not entirely neutralized, by a single defective unit.

Surely no holder of the priesthood would choose to be the defective cell, holding up the work of the Lord. All of us would like to live so that the Lord would be happy with our devotion and activity, and we would like to feel that we are helping to build the kingdom of God. To do this it is necessary that we be alert and do all in our power to thwart the evil designs of Satan and his cohorts—especially in times of prosperity when the people are inclined to turn away from the teachings of the Lord.

Onslaught of Satan

Members of the Church today are probably in a better financial position than ever before. The Church is growing rapidly and being more generally accepted in the world than ever before.

There seems to be a greater feeling of security. All of this has a tendency to cause us to fall away from the Church because we set our minds too much on the things of this world. Nephi warned his people against the onslaught of the temptations of Satan in these words:

“For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

“And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.” (2 Ne. 28:20-21.)

Let us consider three things which today particularly are leading the people away. First, failure to keep the Sabbath day holy; second, breaking the Word of Wisdom; third, unchastity. There are many others.

Observing the Sabbath

The Sabbath day seems to have become a day of recreation. Professional sports keep thousands of people at home with their television sets or traveling to places where the games are played. Thousands participate as players or spectators, and in their affluence people own boats, motorcycles, campers, fishing gear, and other sports equipment, and tend to feel it is a waste not to use them to their full advantage on weekends, including Sunday.

The Word of Wisdom

Seeking worldly pleasures leads many of our youth into forbidden paths where they begin to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, all of which become habit-forming; and eventually they are engulfed in many other evils related to these things. The influence of television particularly is most damaging as alcohol, tobacco, and sex are por-

trayed as contributing to popularity and making one a part of the “in” group.

Pornography abounds, and its ill effects are evident on every side. You know what they are. I will simply say that neither adult nor youth can see or listen to or communicate in pornography without becoming contaminated and endangering the moral fiber of the community. The sex pervert, the rapist, and the thief have become what they are because of what has been fed into their minds, which in turn has prompted the deeds they perform.

Unchastity

Immorality and unchastity are so common today that our youth, seeing many types of perversions on television and in movies, are feeling that these are accepted modes of living. I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of keeping ourselves clean and pure and chaste in order to be worthy to bear this holy priesthood and to prepare ourselves and our families for eternal life.

We have been given the family home evening program as one means of combating evil and strengthening our youth, where we can teach our children to pray and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

We must always remember that though we are in the world, we must not be part of it. We just cannot follow the ways of the world. We must dare to be different. We must not be influenced by those who would call us peculiar. The Lord said to the children of Israel:

“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.” (Deut. 14:2.)

Testimony of God's love

Now, my brethren, I would like to bear my testimony to you and bear wit-

ness that I know, as I know I stand here, that God is a personal, living God in whose image we were formed. He is interested in us and wants us to succeed. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son [Jesus Christ], that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) He has given us the way by which we should live and act as priesthood holders, which we are; and He and His Son, Jesus Christ, came to this earth and restored the gospel in its fulness. We are so fortunate to have that gospel, to understand who we are and why we are here and how we can get back into the presence of our Heavenly Father. He

expects every boy to so live all the time to be an example for good.

I appeal to every man and to every boy within the sound of my voice this night to be just what I have recommended he should be, to make a personal evaluation and to determine within his heart to so live as to please the Lord and, wherever he is, to make his influence felt for good. If each of us will do this we will be welcomed back into the presence of our Heavenly Father.

May we meet there when we have finished our work here I humbly pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Beloved brethren, I should like to say a few words to you if I may. What an opportunity it is to meet together under these auspices, 230,000 of us, possibly more. We welcome you again this night and ask the Lord to bless us while we are thus convened.

Children's Medical Center

There are two or three matters I would like to bring to your attention. We have written a letter to all the stake presidencies in the western United States saying that in the past the Primary Children's Medical Center received substantial financial support through the annual Penny Parade. These funds enabled the hospital to admit children in need of assistance without regard to race, creed, religion, or ability to pay. Since this source of support is no longer available, the hospital has organized a children's fund, which will be conducting a penny-by-the-inch fund drive in the month of February 1977. All funds received will be used to continue charity services. We think the program is worthy of your support.

Support of monument fund

And I wish to call your attention to another matter deserving your attention and support. The general presidency of the Relief Society more than a year ago proposed to the First Presidency and the Twelve the erection of a monument to the women of the Church. In view of the fact that the Prophet Joseph organized the Relief Society in Nauvoo on March 17, 1842, it was felt that this monument should stand in Nauvoo. The Presidency and the Twelve, after consideration, felt to endorse this proposal with the understanding that the project would be funded primarily through the voluntary contributions of the women of the Church. Work on the monument has been going forward, and contributions are being received.

We earnestly ask that stake presidents and bishops give their endorsement to this undertaking and encourage their respective Relief Society presidents in their efforts to secure the needed contributions. We are confident that, with support from you brethren, these funds can be gathered without doing any injury to anyone. If