

ELDER MARION D. HANKS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I SHOULD LIKE to join briefly with Brother Petersen in commending and bearing my witness of faith in the young people of the Church in this day. Ten days ago I met with a great conference of servicemen at the Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio. It was a marvelous experience and one which I appreciated and was grateful for. Yesterday I met two of those fine young men in this conference; they had flown in from Lackland with some twenty-five others. Unfortunately the storm that prevented the delivery of our flowers for this conference also stopped their landing here. They had to go back to Denver and then on back to their base (except these two), since they had to be there this morning. They missed, the twenty-five, the blessing of being here, yet their faith in coming evidenced their courage, their devotion, and the great loyalty they and their generation have for the Church.

I am grateful I am connected closely to them and with them in bonds of love and faith in God and the message of the great restoration.

Notwithstanding the pressures of this experience, I sat yesterday afternoon almost wishing I might be called in order that I might then bear timely testimony of appreciation to the two men who offered the prayers at that session. Since we last met in conference, I have had the wonderful blessing of touring two of the great missions of this Church which are presided over by those two men, President Peter J. Ricks and President Claudious Bowman. I should like to say of them and the many like them and the thousands who serve with them through the call of the Lord, that they are common and humble men in the very finest sense of those terms, but that they have uncommon faith and uncommon courage and uncommon dignity in the great work they do. As I thought of them I thought of some words of Thomas Carlyle. I went home and copied them last night:

Two men I honor and no third. First, the toil-worn craftsman that with earth-

made implement laboriously conquers the earth and makes her man's. A second man I honor and still more highly: him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable, not daily bread, but the bread of life.

These men and the thousands like them who preside over the wards and stakes, the branches, the districts, the missions of the Church, are men who know the task of "toilworn implement" using, but who know that more important even than this significant opportunity in God's world, the right to work for one's bread, is the great blessing and responsibility of seeking that which is spiritually indispensable, and which is the most important thing a man can seek.

I honor these men, and I feel very humble as I travel in their presence and bear witness with them of the truths God has given us to know.

I read recently out of a newspaper a few words I should like to call to your attention as an example of another great idea these men call my attention to. Dateline, New York City, last August 7, from a press service, these words, written by three ministers of Christian denominations:

The true ministry of the layman is being rediscovered. He is now coming back to the function he exercised in the early church. There is today in the church a great resurgence of Christian interest on the part of the laity. In ancient times, in the days of Christ, there was not the marked distinction between the laity and clergy. Laity as used in the New Testament simply meant the people of God, but through the centuries more and more of the work of the church fell on the shoulders of those who made it their full time profession. The liturgical movement in both Catholicism and Protestantism is winning back for the laity their ancient rights in the Church's worship life. The layman in his secular work is increasingly seeing his vocation as that of the Church's chief evangelist. He is the church in the world.

This is a truth spoken by men of good will and courage and devotion, but which has been available to the knowledge of these and other men since the

days of the Prophet of God who died in the year 1844 at the hands of intolerant neighbors. The teaching, preaching, leadership of the Church should be done in Christ's Church today as it was done in his day—by the humble members of the Church, laymen holding the priesthood and authority of God. These and other truths are here available to men, and the world is beginning to learn some of them.

Last week-end, a counselor in one of the great stakes I had the privilege of visiting called attention to certain recent articles dealing with the way a chapel ought to be built, saying that in our day churches are coming to the conclusion that chapels ought to be built with classrooms attached and with recreational facilities.

I say to these good and honest people that from the beginning of the restoration of the gospel of the Lord, it has been known that the gospel was meant to take care of the full life of man; and whenever they find a Latter-day Saint chapel fully completed and dedicated, they will invariably find that there are in it classrooms and recreational facilities designed to provide for development in all the aspects of the lives of its members—physical, social, intellectual, cultural, as well as spiritual.

There is time for but one other thought. I read recently in one of our great national magazines a few words I thought to be highly significant about our relationship with our Father in heaven. This came from one of the great religious leaders of our day, a man whom I have revered and whose

works I have read since I was a boy. Says he:

Vital religion cannot be maintained and preserved on the theory that God dealt with our human race only in the far past ages, and that the Bible is the only evidence we have that our God is a living, revealing, communicating God. If God ever spoke, he is still speaking. He is the great I Am, not the great He Was.

This truth, so majestic and magnificent and basically important, is a truth which has been available anew to mankind since 1820, when a humble, simple boy had enough humility and enough real love of truth to seek from his Father in heaven a manifestation of those things he needed to know, to find his place, his purpose, and his constructive work in life.

The answer is that God does live, that the Savior is the great I Am; he has always been, he shall always be. God's truths are revealed to men when they will pay the price of seeking earnestly, and finding, being willing to accept, and accepting, then dedicating themselves consistently and loyally to him and to his cause.

I am grateful that I have been, by the providence of God, brought into an age and into a Church where the truths are known of which I am able to bear witness today: That God does live, that he does reveal his truths, that this is the Church of Jesus Christ on the earth, that we may through obedience to his word find peace, here and now, enjoy eternal opportunity commensurate with our preparation for it, and arrive at a reunion with him who made us and who is our Father which art in heaven. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

BISHOP BUEHNER, commenting upon the limited time allotted us in life, and the fact that many detour and get lost and thus fail to find the narrow way that leads to life eternal, brings me to the theme that I should like to discuss with you this morning.

Among the many choice teachings

given by the Savior in that inspiring Sermon on the Mount, is this important instruction:

Enter ye in at the strait gate . . .

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14.)