

and the world was well on its way into darkness of complete apostasy.

But we live in a time when "the field is white already to harvest." We have examples of stake missionaries who have brought conversion into the lives of five or ten or twenty human souls in a single year, and as Samuel Walter Foss cried, "Give me men to match my mountains," so the Church is crying for men to match the great opportunities of the present day.

In 1932 Walter Pitkin wrote a book entitled *Life Begins at Forty*. But life begins every morning. Life begins when we begin, and our real progress

begins when we accept God's answer to that greatest question of our lives, "What shall we do with Jesus?"

May our Heavenly Father inspire us to get the right answer before it is too late, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President David O. McKay:

You have just listened to Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve. We shall now hear Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Alma Sonne.

## ELDER MARION D. HANKS

### *Of the First Council of the Seventy*



HUMBLY PRAY for direction and inspiration in these few moments. It seems to me that I am almost under compulsion to abandon that which I might have said, and in view

of this warm and heartwarming sermon by President Joseph Fielding Smith and in view of the presence here of this magnificent group of young people, add my testimony and an expression of my conviction to that which has been said.

Memory is a beautiful and wonderful thing. As President Smith named this morning the places he had been and some of the events of his missionary adventures, my heart responded as many of yours must have to the enumeration of places familiar to many of us under circumstances very different from the mission which motivated him. I thought specifically of one island he did not visit but which might well be some day the subject of such a mission, where 5300 American boys gave their lives in order that the cause which they represented might be successful.

It was of one of those boys that I thought this morning, and as President Smith spoke, I tried to remember and write down a few words I once memorized which came from the pen of one of the American boys who died in the battle of Iwo Jima.

This twenty-year-old, (and I know nothing of him save that), was one of

the 5300. In a little ten-cent notebook dated 18 February 1945, the day of his great adventure, he wrote his last will and testament—a short and incisive thing. He might have written about many different subjects. After all, he was only twenty. He was on an island he had never heard of, I suppose, before war took him there. I assume he might have had in his heart some resistance to what awaited him. He might have been thinking about home and loved ones; but what he wrote seems to me to have been inspired of God. These are the words as I remember them, and I think they are right.

"This is the time for new revelation. People don't think much about religion nowadays, but we need a voice from on high, brother, and I don't mean maybe. This thing has got out of human ability to run. I'm no religious fanatic, but we are in a situation where something better than human brains has got to give us advice."

This was the last will and testament of a twenty-year-old boy who died with the thought in his mind that the predicament mankind had worked themselves into was one which only divine help might solve. He cried for new revelation, for a voice from on high, for a voice of spiritual authority. I wondered when I first read it which of those whom I knew and loved and lost had answered his cry—whether it be Marsden or Elwin

Saturday, October 1

Second Day

or Ray or Chick or David or one of many others—I wonder which one has told him, as surely one of them has, that the voice of spiritual authority has been and is being heard in our very day. The voice from on high has spoken to man, a voice which has proclaimed that God in truth does live, that Jesus is in truth his divinely Begotten Son who lived to teach us how to live, and died to save us; that there is a plan which God himself has made available to his beloved children, obedience to which will bring us the blessings which we might as his children naturally expect if we are obedient to his will, and which will ultimately exalt us in that condition of beauty and glory which will allow us eternally to work, to grow, to learn, to love, to live with him who is our Father.

As I have traveled through this Church, I have been blessed on many occasions with experiences like those of President Smith, as have all of these other brethren. This morning the name of Biloxi, Mississippi, was read as a ward in the recently organized New Orleans Stake. In Biloxi, some few of you will know, there stands a magnificent chapel erected at the cost of about \$75,000, and that chapel was almost one hundred percent built and paid for by dedicated Latter-day Saint servicemen. I had the blessing of dedicating the building, and afterwards talked with a humble young fellow. I asked him what he was doing and how he was enjoying the service, and he said, "I do not enjoy the service so much, but I am enjoying service in the Church." He told me that he was a stake missionary.

I said, "Have you had any success?" "Oh, some," he said. "We have baptized eight this year—my companion and I—and we have some other good possibilities."

As we moved to Pensacola, we found a young navy officer active as one of the district presidency, traveling with two of his wonderful young companions in the service from branch to branch, bearing witness of the truth, stimulating the saints, and doing the work that needs to be done. Almost everywhere we have gone—San Antonio, Los Angeles, Washington, D. C.,

and elsewhere—we have found the same dedication and the same basic loyalty to the Lord.

Now to you wonderful young people who are here behind me, and to all others, may I say that there are those who would seek to make a "deal" with you, in the vernacular of our day, who would invite you to trade your faith, your self-respect, your loyalty to the Lord, for some of the enticements of this day—for education or wealth, for social preference, for political prominence or business success, for acceptability at school, for improper indulgence, for any of the others of the enticements which allure.

May I say to you that there is *nothing* in this world *worth having* which you need to give up to be a good Latter-day Saint. If wealth or education, social preference or political prominence, power in your profession—if these are what you want, my testimony, and I get it traveling through the Church among the wonderful people of this faith, is that you may be anything you want to be worth being, *and a believing, faithful Latter-day Saint.*

There was a writer who said: "People who take off their religion to be educated or wealthy or socially accepted are like the man who took off his boots to walk in a briar-patch."

If ever you need the Spirit of God, if ever you need faith and loyalty to his way, it is while you are educated (and the Church encourages you to become so); it is while you have wealth (which may come to you if you seek it honestly and use it wisely); it is while you are politically prominent or socially accepted; it is while, in your school activities and achievements, you find occasions for leadership.

I think, as I conclude, of a wonderful young man—perhaps the only Latter-day Saint in a leading university in a great southern state—who was the president of the student body, editor of *Law Review*, one of the outstanding young men of the nation. His studies had perhaps been interfered with a little by having to go from dormitory to dormitory in answer to requests to talk about the Church and the gospel, but he had done it consistently, had lived his religion loyally, and had been an

intelligent, and faithful representative of the Church.

I think of a few weeks ago in Logan when a fine young man bore testimony in our conference before returning to Columbia College, where he is serving as student body president of that great school. He said he had been offered a graduate scholarship when he was finished, and hoped it would still be available after he had served a mission. There are many, many similar cases throughout the Church. No Latter-day Saint young person needs to sacrifice anything important to be a real member of the Church. Remember that there are many wonderful people, old and young—like the boy on Iwo—who

desperately seek what you have, or may have if you desire it and seek it and live for it.

I bear testimony that God lives, and that this is his work, and if I know anything in the world it is that obedience to his law brings happiness, and the opposite—disobedience—brings unhappiness, of which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.

### ELDER ALMA SONNE

#### *Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**Y BRETHREN AND SISTERS, I am very happy for the privilege of standing before you for a moment, to express my gratitude for the fine things we have heard and seen at this general conference of the Church. This morning at 7:30 in the Assembly Hall we held a welfare meeting. We heard something about cattle, beef cattle, and dairy cattle, and how to manage farms, especially the welfare farms. This instruction was given by experts from the Utah State Agricultural College. When they had given their talks, President Clark made some observations. President Clark, you may know, is a farmer and a cattleman in his own right—if he can qualify for that distinction, by working two or three hours on Saturday afternoon on his farm. We were greatly edified.

It reminded me of the funeral service which was held up in the Bear Lake country for Brother Hyrum Nebeker, also a cattleman. Prior to his death he had selected the hymns he wanted sung at the service. Among them was the well-known hymn we sing so frequently, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." He also requested that everyone in the gathering join in singing this hymn, not only the choir, but those also

who sat on the front seats, and the entire congregation. Seldom does one hear a song sung with more feeling than was done on this occasion. Everyone sang, and all seemed to feel the spirit and the significance of this great hymn.

I thought of the statement made by someone who said, "Tell me the ballads a people sing, and I will tell you their character." I hope the Latter-day Saints will be judged by the songs they sing on occasions like this. This hymn, in particular, suggested guidance, prophetic guidance. Guidance is a beautiful word, it is a meaningful word. We all need to be guided and directed and inspired in our work and in our responsibilities.

I recall a poem I learned as a boy;

Hand in hand with angels through the world we go;  
Brighter eyes are on us than we blind ones know;  
Tender voices greet us than we deaf will own;  
But never walking heav'nward can we walk alone.

Those who dislike guidance, it seems to me, lack in humility. Jesus believed in guidance. I read a verse from the Gospels:

... when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he