

ELDER MARION D. HANKS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Saints, he spoke of a Spirit through which the things of God may be known. In a modern time when God revealed his will to his choice servant Joseph Smith, there was spoken of a Spirit through which they who listen and he who speaks may find communion and be mutually edified. For that Spirit I earnestly pray.

In the great land in which I am privileged to work in the missionary cause with many of your choice sons and daughters, a clergyman recently issued a statement, urging his people not to listen to the representatives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as they seek to converse with them. He urged the people not to "surrender the substance for the shadow." This latter admonition is interesting and should receive the most serious consideration. I have been thinking all through this conference, as testimony and witness have been borne as to God and Christ and the relationship of man to them, as to the eternal nature of life, the reality of the resurrection, the profound importance and absolute validity of the restoration, "Where is the substance? Where is the shadow?"

This inquiry would be valid and of great interest in every aspect of religious faith and practice. Comparisons of the revealed word of God and the Church established on the earth by Christ and his apostles with presently existing churches and their creeds and organizations and practices would be interesting. I commend to you this experience. For today, let me center attention on one theme to which the clergyman's suggestion is pertinent.

It has been my blessing for many years to work among the young and among those who work with the young. Recently it has been my especial privilege to labor with several hundred choice young men and women, serving as missionaries in a foreign land. I believe I know better today than I have ever known in my life how substantial and remarkable and marvelous are the blessings of God to this Church in these

days. He has blessed us with substance in a day when mists of darkness shadow the land. Ours is a family-centered religion, our families are religion-centered, and the gospel as we understand it affects the total personality and all of the aspects of the life of the individual child of God. What do the young people need? What can we offer them of real substance which will help them to avoid the shadows of falsehood and failure and sin and sorrow?

There are some suggestions I'd like to make, not to the young and not especially or at least uniquely to their parents, but to all of us, including parents, who deal with and influence or have great potential to influence and bless the young.

I am sure as I begin, that we are united, you and I and all people of goodwill and honest intent throughout the world, as to the objectives we may desire for the young. I don't know a single parent or other honorable human being who does not want for the young a decent, constructive, contributing, happy life. Many of us would like to help youth, though many give only lip-service to their need for help. What would we want for them? Oh, I'd like my son to win an Olympic event. This would delight me, please me greatly, make me proud. I'd like my little boy to be a fine surgeon or lawyer or salesman, or whatever he chooses to be. But if he were to succeed at some significant service and fail to be an honest, ethical, moral, spiritually perceptive man, I would be a failure and a sad father, in my own eyes. What good people want for youngsters is constructive, happy, participating lives.

It would seem likely that we are united also in our estimate of their value as individual children of God. They are infinitely valuable. Do you know the poem

"Nobody knows what a boy is worth,
We'll have to wait and see.
But every man in a noble place
A boy once used to be."

Bishop Simpson's allusion to the Second World War brought to my mind a story which impresses me greatly as to the value of one individual and the impact of one life in the lives of others.

The first great B-29 strike on those who were then our enemy, flown from a land base, was led by an airplane named "City of Los Angeles." (There had been previous strikes from carriers, but this was our first flown from our own airfields recovered from the enemy. It was meant to inform him that the war was now to be carried to his own homeland, and it was a very important mission.) Aboard the aircraft were twelve men, eleven regular crewmen and a colonel flying as squadron commander for the mission. They were to reach a rendezvous point 50 to 75 miles off the mainland of the enemy, then assume regular fighting formation and fly in on target, which was a complex of high octane gasoline plants feeding the enemy war potential.

Rendezvous point was reached as scheduled, and Colonel Sprouse ordered the dropping of the phosphorous bomb which was to mark the point. Sergeant "Red" Irwin skidded the bomb down the chute as ordered. The act was loaded with death. The flap at the end of the bomb chute had somehow become stuck. When the bomb struck it, it exploded prematurely and burst back into the cabin of the airplane and into the face and chest of Sergeant Irwin. Dropping to the deck it began swiftly to burn its way through the thin metal flooring separating it from the incendiary bombs stored in the bomb bay below. In moments the "City of Los Angeles" and its crew would be blown to bits far out over the ocean in enemy territory.

Sergeant Irwin, tragically wounded, got to his knees, picked up the bomb in his bare hands, cradled it in his arms, and staggered up the passageway. Crashing into the navigator's table, he had to stop and unlatch it with fingers that left burn marks in the hardwood. By now the aircraft was filled with acrid fumes, blinding the pilot, and was wallowing less than 300 feet above the water. Irwin staggered into the pilot's compartment shouting "Window, win-

dow." He could not see that it was already open, and his fumbling fingers left burn marks on the metal. He threw the bomb out of the window and collapsed to the deck. Two hours later, Colonel Sprouse having ordered the "City of Los Angeles" back to base in the slim hope that Irwin's life might be saved, they reached Iwo Jima. Irwin's flesh was still smoking with imbedded phosphorous when he was removed from the plane by comrades who had to avert their faces from his tragic wounds.

Sergeant Irwin lived to receive his nation's highest honor for extreme bravery and to survive nearly fifty plastic surgery operations which restored him to a somewhat normal life. He lived to marry and to become a father. And with him, there lived eleven other men who but for his almost unbelievable courage would be dead. Eleven men, spared to their lives and work and families through the decision and courageous act of one man! When Sergeant Irwin picked up that bomb, he knew that it was burning at 1,300 degrees Fahrenheit, 1,088 degrees hotter than boiling water!

This dramatic story came out of a war, but its implications are applicable to each of us, to our families, communities, nations. How many young people are there in your home or neighborhood, choice young children of God, who are wanting for lack of someone who has the courage and concern to interest himself or herself in their welfare? The prime responsibility, of course, is in the home, and we are as a Church and people anxiously interested in strengthening our homes and families. But we are aware that there are literally millions of youngsters who are not receiving in their homes the care they desperately need. They are the legitimate concern of all of us.

What can we do for them?

I offer these quick suggestions in headlines only. The rest of the story, each of us may fashion as we will. I believe them to be the substance of youthful success and joy.

1. Be concerned with their welfare. Recognize their worth and our potential

to bless them and influence them and help them and lift them.

2. Understand that they are different. They are not all out of one mold. They are at varying levels of spiritual and social and intellectual maturity, even though they may be the same age. They must be accepted and dealt with as individuals, as they are, and in terms of what they can be, and helped to become the best that they can be.

3. They need to be taught. They need instruction. Someone has said that we habitually overestimate their experience and underestimate their intelligence. We expect them to act like little adults, and yet we fail to take time and interest to teach them.

At a meeting in England a few weeks ago a little girl, perhaps younger than four years of age, walked into a hall where a film and lecture were to be presented. I watched her as she stepped daintily over a moving picture projector cord. A man standing near the machine to protect it from accidental damage said to her, "Sweetheart, hurry and sit down. We're going to start." She sat down, right there in the middle of the aisle, smiling sweetly at those around her. He picked her up and explained that he had wanted her to sit up in front on a chair and then escorted her there.

Now, as the father of five children I am not blind to reality. I know that they don't always do what we tell them, but if we have a proper appreciation of their value and of our ability to influence them, if we will accept them as they are and teach them in a spirit of love, wonderful blessings will come to them and to us. Let me add it as a special and significant point:

4. We must really love them. We can afford to make the mistakes of the inexperienced if we sincerely love them.

5. They need discipline. They need to realize that there are rules, wise and fair rules, which apply to them, lack of conformity to which brings a penalty.

You will remember the wonderful counsel given by the Lord to Joseph Smith in response to his anguished cry from the dungeon at Liberty, Missouri, where he had been cruelly confined for months, away from his friends and loved ones. The spirit of the priesthood was

movingly explained and direction given as to how it must be used. Included was this remarkable statement: "Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; . . ." (D&C 121:43.)

Young people need discipline, administered in love.

In the great state of Vermont a few months ago I faced an unruly crowd of choice teenagers brought from all regions in the state. They had listened to good music, had heard the mayors and the governor, and had responded to every effort with contempt and discourtesy. The person who introduced me was quite apologetic. I think he wished that I would disappear, so embarrassing had been the behavior of the young people to that moment. I stood up and said something I hadn't ever said before to a group of teens. I said, "I'm sorry that most of you didn't hear the great talk that your governor just delivered. It was a wonderful talk, and you would have profited from hearing it, but you weren't listening. Let me repeat the theme of what your governor said. He talked about 'Vermont's Chief Asset, Her Teenagers.' I'd like to tell you the truth. I'd like to tell you that I've been all over America commending your generation and expressing confidence in you, and tonight you have made me wonder. For the first time you've really made me wonder. I'd just like to tell you that if your behavior tonight is typical, if you've been acting as you really are, and if you are Vermont's chief asset, the Lord help Vermont."

Well, they listened. I spent the next forty-five minutes showing forth an increase of love toward them, talking to the theme of "Moral Courage." I did my best to recover from what might be thought a very strange way to approach a group of young people. They didn't move a muscle. They listened, and their response was wonderful.

When the meeting was over, I walked out of the building and was stopped on the path outside by a rather grim-looking group of handsome, rugged young men. One of them stepped for-

Sunday, October 7

Third Day

ward and said, "Mr. Hanks, we were very grateful for your talk on moral courage. We learned a lot. But we'd like you to know that what you did here tonight was lots more important than anything you said, and we're never going to forget it."

Young people need to be disciplined in love.

6. They need wholesome participation with others.

7. Young people need to be encouraged to stretch, to develop their creative capacities.

8. They need to be taught and given experience in the great religious truths. Would you bless youth? Teach them the truth about God and Christ and themselves. Teach them that they have a special responsibility toward God and all their fellow men, his children. Teach them to be compassionate and considerate and kind, which they can best be when they know God as their true Father in whose image and likeness they are created; when they know Christ as their living Savior; when they recognize themselves as choice, responsible children of God, brothers to all men. Lead them to religious search and service and reverence. Help them to learn the truth.

9. Be an example to them of what you'd like them to be.

I testify that God lives, that we are his children, and that we can bless each other and our choice young brothers

and sisters if we will. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of the Seventy, president of the British Mission, has been our concluding speaker.

We shall conclude this sixth session of the 132nd Semi-Annual General Conference of the Church with the Tabernacle Choir singing "Hallelujah Chorus." Following the singing the benediction will be offered by Elder Alvin Robert Barlow, president of the Gunnison Stake. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

May we again express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many television and radio stations who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to millions throughout North America, South America, Europe, and in many other areas of the world during the two hours we have been assembled in this session.

The Tabernacle Choir sang as a concluding number "Hallelujah Chorus."

Elder Alvin Robert Barlow, president of the Gunnison Stake, offered the benediction.

Conference adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

THIRD DAY

AFTERNOON MEETING

The concluding session of the Conference convened in the Tabernacle at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, October 7, 1962.

President David O. McKay presided and conducted the services of the meeting.

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral music for this session of the Conference, with Richard P. Condie conducting and Alexander Schreiner at the organ.

President McKay made the following introductory remarks:

President David O. McKay:

(Even electricity is slow when you are waiting—)

Members of the Church are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the seventh and concluding session of the One Hundred Thirty-Second Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

The General Priesthood meeting last