

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

As always, I declare my dependence upon the Spirit that motivates all of these proceedings.

THE FUTURE AS IT AFFECTS YOUTH

I was happy yesterday to hear President Grant and President Clark address part of their remarks to the young men of my generation who face a breaking up of the pattern of their lives by those events which we now face, and I was happy to hear them remembered, in the opening prayer this morning. We have lived to see the day when the best laid plans of men have gone wrong, and these young men are facing the postponement or abandonment of many of their ambitions and most cherished dreams and plans for their own futures. And as the young men are affected, so are the young women. We sympathize with them greatly.

I met with such a group a week ago today, a group of M Men, and I felt them reaching for a message on this subject. I should like to have the ability briefly to deliver that message to them.

I think it shouldn't be a time for too much pessimism and discouragement, in spite of all the uncertainties. I think we should remind ourselves of the fact that there has always been uncertainty. No one ever lived in a static society. No one has ever had fixed guarantees that his way of life would not be interrupted, and I am sure that it is not a time for disrupting our plans. The time for preparation in the lives of our young men is altogether too short, and I feel in my heart that they should go forward with whatever they have in mind, and let interruption overtake them when and how it will.

It certainly is not a time for living from hand to mouth. It is a time for laying broader foundations than ever before, because no matter what kind of world we find ourselves living in tomorrow, the best qualified men will always be in demand, and whether we are living here or not, we shall be living somewhere, and those intangible things that we acquire we shall take with us wherever we go.

THE CALL TO ARMS

Some of our young men, and some of our mothers who are called upon to send them forth into service, wonder why they have to go. There have been some who have urged the Church and its members to declare themselves conscientious objectors. There may be some merits in this position. Perhaps we should reserve the right so to declare ourselves at some future time. I can think of possibilities and circumstances arising under which there could conceivably come some times and conditions for which we might want to reserve that right. But there are two sides to the question. Traditionally this has not been our position. In the century of our existence there is no people of like numbers that I know of anywhere in the world who have a better record for giving service when the call has come than this people.

No matter how ardently we may agree or disagree with those policies which have been and are being pursued in this regard, we are committed as a people to loyalty to constituted authority. That is true of our people in all the world, no matter what nation they may live in.

There may be another reason why our young men should respond to this call. Many people, and we are among them I am sure, bitterly regret the fact that when war comes it takes the cream of our manhood, it does not take the physically or the mentally unfit. It takes those who are best capable of rendering service, and we regret this fact most gravely.

But there is another side, and I would like to quote a paragraph from one of our nationally known commentators and columnists which appeared in the press a short time ago. Speaking of all our defense preparations and the creation of materials for defense, he stated that it also should be remembered that these things

can be used against us by an inside enemy just as easily as we can use them against an outside foe. This means a character-building campaign should be a definite part of our defense program. Now, more than ever before in the history of warfare, it is vital that the people of the strongest character should furnish the men who are to be trained for this new and all-important branch of our national defense. Let religious and civic leaders who are serious in their prayers re-read this last sentence.

I am sure that you and I, since an army appears to be a necessary evil—it has always been so far as history tells us anything, in ancient Israel, in Book of Mormon times, and down to the present—since it appears to be a necessary evil under the conditions in which we live, I am sure that you and I would not care to have an army in our midst made up of the worst elements of our society. And I am sure that our young men who remember who they are and what they are can be a leaven and a wholesome influence in this service into which they go. This applies of course only to those who keep in mind their principles and their ideals and who always conduct themselves in accordance therewith.

A LESSON FROM THE LIFE OF JACOB

I am reminded of the story of Jacob in the Old Testament, in Genesis, when he was traveling in a strange land. Up to that time he had had limited experience and had been held close to home ties. But in this strange place he awoke one night after a dream and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." (Genesis 28:16) I would like our young men to remember that wherever they are, God is in that place and they must take Him into their confidence and conduct themselves in His ways.

We cannot departmentalize the eternal record of our lives. It is one continued story. As Latter-day Saints we don't behave one way in the army and one way in business and another in Church. That is, not if we give heed to our principles. We do not behave one way at home and another way away from home. Wherever we are, remember that God is in this place also, and when the final record is written and read, all that

we have done and thought, at home and abroad, in all the occupations and in all the pursuits that we may be called upon to undertake, is all a part of the eternal record of all of us, and it stands unalterably for us or against us.

PREPARATION FOR LIFE SHOULD GO FORWARD

And to those young people who are inclined to be discouraged by the course of events, those who are oppressed with the spirit of "What's the use?" we say to them, there will always be a future. Again quoting from Genesis a passage that is a comforting assurance: "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22.) And we must not cease in our preparations or in our living of life to the fullest that we are able to do it in accordance with the conditions and opportunities of our own generation. If we make the best of all our circumstances of our own generation and time the Lord will ask no more of us.

Life is not very long, I think. In the normal course of events mine is now half over, and I feel that I have scarcely put my foot in the door. I am sure that it isn't long enough to gamble any of the values of eternity against the values of time. And this thought recalls one of the most impressive passages from the Doctrine and Covenants, in which the Lord spoke to the Prophet Joseph Smith in one of his hours of deepest despair:

My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes. (Doctrine and Covenants 121:7, 8.)

And so I say to these young men of my generation: Go forth and live your lives in all of the fulness that is possible for you, and remember who you are and what you are, whether you are at home or abroad, in the army or out of it, and the Lord will bless you and prosper you and comfort you and reward you, and bring good out of all the circumstances of your lives.

I leave you my testimony that I know that God lives; that Jesus is the Christ; that Joseph Smith and all of his successors have been prophets of God, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Of the First Council of the Seventy

From "away down under" there is this that is said by that people: "A rain drop above and a chrysalis beneath,"—their way of stating that God's beneficent kindness produces a beautiful race of human creatures. I think if that great race of lovely and intelligent people could have the privilege of seeing this gathering, they would know that what their forefathers and immediate ancestors declared to them is absolutely true.