

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

First of all, I should like to express my gratitude to my Father in heaven for my membership in this Church, and for my fellowship with you who are here, and with those whom you represent, throughout the world.

There has been running through my mind a phrase from the Doctrine and Covenants, accentuated by some phases of the statistical report given here yesterday morning, which I shall refer to in a moment. This phrase appears in a number of places:

. . . trouble me no more concerning this matter.

And in one place it is followed by the further reminder:

But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come. (D. & C. 59:22-23.)

This phrase "trouble me no more concerning this matter" which, as stated, appears in a number of places, would seem to have been an indication from the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith and his associates that when principles had been given, when the mind and the will of the Lord had been made known to the Prophet, he and his people should proceed in accordance with those principles without unnecessarily seeking further instruction, or further troubling the Lord concerning things which they already knew.

This thought ties in with another oft-quoted series of verses from the Doctrine and Covenants:

For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward. But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned. (D. & C. 58:26-29.)

"Be Anxiously Engaged in a Good Cause"

It is a great satisfaction to parents, it is a great satisfaction to men in places of leadership, when our children, or those who are working in some assignment for which we are responsible, do precisely what they are asked to do, in the manner in which they are asked to do it. But there is an even greater thrill than this that comes to parents and to those in positions of leadership, and that is, when our children or our associates do a good thing of their own free will—a thing which they haven't been asked to do, specifically, but which they undertake in accordance with the principles which have been

taught them, which they know to be true. That is one of the great thrills of being a parent—when a child who has been taught correct principles proceeds to act in his own behalf in accordance with those principles, and to bring to pass good works and righteousness.

I believe if we should ask the leaders of industry and of business and those who are responsible for the economic well-being and other activities of our nation, what is one of the most difficult things to find, that among those which would be high on the list, if not in highest place, would be the difficulty of finding young people, and old ones too, for that matter, who are willing to take leadership and responsibility, to make decisions, and to see things to their final conclusion and disposal with integrity, with ability, and in accordance with principles which have been pre-determined and agreed upon. And I believe further than any young man who will take leadership and responsibility with integrity and intelligence can have about what he wants.

Obligation to Govern Ourselves Under Correct Principles

Now, as always, there are two forces at work in this world, as there were in the heavens before time began. There is that force which would condition men for servility and regimentation, which would discourage them from thinking and acting for themselves. And then there is that force which, having established sound principles of conduct, would make it possible and encourage men to be free agents, and to use their intelligence and their God-given energies in the accomplishment of good works and righteous purposes.

To bring this down to its application in the Church today, we heard in the statistical report yesterday that there are one hundred fifty-five stakes, thirty-eight missions, more than twelve hundred wards and independent branches, and nearly a million people, and we know that the time is already here (and has long been here) when men holding office in the wards and stakes must more than ever assume responsibility, make decisions, follow through with their assignments to a successful conclusion, proceeding with good works, and bringing to pass many things in righteousness of their own free will, in accordance with the plans which have been laid down, and without importuning too much concerning principles which have already been established and agreed upon.

As the Lord on a number of occasions instructed the Prophet to "trouble him no more" concerning certain matters, the Prophet likewise, even with the Church as small as it was in his day, did virtually that same thing to his associates. He advised that he taught his people correct principles and let them govern themselves. And frequently, as recorded in the *Documentary History of the Church*, when someone from another branch or from another part of the Church, distant somewhat from the place where the Prophet happened to be at that particular time, would write him and ask him

how to proceed with a certain problem or situation (and they had many grievous problems and difficult situations), he would often reply by reminding them of the principles by which they should be guided, answering some of their questions directly where he thought they needed answer and then advising them to proceed in accordance with their own best judgment and to handle the situation themselves.

Use of Free Agency

This generation, in many places in the world, has been deliberately conditioned for regimentation, and I am sure that those forces which are committed to the principle of the free agency of man and his intelligent action and responsibility in his own behalf must be more vigorous than ever before in counteracting this contrary influence. I do not know anything, for example, that is more wasteful of time or more destructive of individuality, than making it necessary for people to wait long hours in long lines. I wouldn't say that it was always avoidable, but certainly it must not become our way of life. Certainly these things must not be permitted to be perpetuated beyond actual necessity, lest our lives become reduced to an inflexible pattern.

I would plead with you, my brethren and sisters, and pray our Father in heaven, that, as individuals and as people and as a nation, we may give our full energies to bringing to pass much righteousness; that we may not withhold our labor; that we may get in and do the job that needs to be done, and work and give our strength constructively for the creation and the production of those things which the world so badly needs; that we may proceed with full purpose of heart in accordance with the principles we know to be true; and that we may take responsibility and make decisions and bring to pass much righteousness of our own volition, not waiting to be commanded in all things, for the way is clear before us, and our duties and obligations and responsibilities are not hidden from us. May God help us so to proceed, I ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH F. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

My brethren and sisters, will you give me your faith, and will you join me in my prayer that I may be equal to this assignment?

Night before last in the welfare meeting the President of the Church called attention to the fact that we as a people had suffered relatively little during the war, and he suggested that we think on this. I have been thinking about it since he called it to our attention. This country has suffered relatively little. Grievous as have been our bereavements, the people in this country have not wanted for food;