

REMARKS OF ELDRED G. SMITH AT THE COMMEMORATION  
OF THE 200th BIRTHDAY OF HYRUM SMITH.

(Given in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square, on February 13, 2000)

It is a great occasion for us to gather as a family to pay tribute and gratitude to those who came before, and especially Hyrum Smith whose birthday we are commemorating.

In the many years since his death in 1844 many eloquent and beautiful tributes have been paid to him. For the most part these tributes dwell primarily on his being a confidant and support of his Prophet Brother Joseph. And that he was! We all know how intertwined their lives were.

However, not often do we remember, that he did a great and mighty work in his own right. He was very favored of The Lord who said of him, (D&C 124:15) "I love him because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me."

The Lord assigned to him great and holy callings. He walked morning and night back and forth from the printer carrying the sacred and precious manuscript of the Book of Mormon while it was being printed, later becoming one of the Eight Witnesses to that record. He was called to exhort the Church and was a persuasive missionary; was chairman of the Building Committees for both the Kirtland and Nauvoo temples. He was a counselor to the First Presidency and released from that office to be appointed Assistant President of the Church as a second witness of the restoration. At the same time he was made Presiding Patriarch of the Church when the Lord declared, "My servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch and hold the keys to the sealing blessings, even the Holy Spirit of Promise...and of the patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people." His personal accomplishments go on and on.

Most importantly of all he was a caring and thoughtful husband to both of his wives, Jerusha Barden and Mary Fielding. In addition to this he was a tender and loving father to his eight children.

On December 9, of 1834, his Father, Joseph Smith, Sr. called his children together for the purpose of pronouncing patriarchal blessings on all of them. Among these blessings is the one given to Hyrum, then the oldest.

In that blessing (apart of which 'printed on the back of your program) Joseph Smith, Sr. said to Hyrum, "...Thy name shall not be blotted out from among the just, for the righteous shall rise up, and also thy children after thee and say; 'thy memory is just, that thou were a just man and perfect in thy day.'"

He transferred to Hyrum and his seed after him the role of the eldest as the caretaker of the family.

Tonight, assembling as the children of Hyrum Smith after him, we are at least partially fulfilling the prophecy that "thy children after thee shall rise up to preserve thy memory

that thy name shall not be blotted out." The assignment by Joseph Smith, Sr. to Hyrum and his descendants to preserve the memory and the caretaking of his family, places responsibility upon all of us. We must preserve our records, the memorabilia, do our genealogy and temple work. An example of preservation is the articles displayed on the tables in front of me. They are identified. These are family possessions that came in the wagons of the family as they traveled across the plains from Nauvoo. We invite you to look at them, but we earnestly ask that you do not touch them, nor use a photoflash on or near them.

Also, BYU has established a receptacle for the Joseph Smith, Sr. family collection where Smith family portraits, records, letters, diaries, artifacts and journals, etc. of historical significance will be preserved and displayed in a dedicated and secured location available to members of the family sometime after the coming month of April. We encourage you to consider this as a spot where your individual families may place items of historical value to the Joseph Smith, Sr. family.

During the dark days of Liberty Jail, Hyrum's thoughts were often with his family. From the jail he wrote to Sister Grinnels, who was caring for the family while Mary Fielding's son, Joseph F. was being born in Far West. A paragraph is addressed especially to the children-- "Lovina you must be a good girl and be kind to your mother and to your little brothers and sisters. Be steady and read your book. You must try to read it through and pray for father that the Lord may help him to come home.

"Little John, little Hyrum, little Jerusha and little Sarah you must be good little children till father comes home. He will come home as soon as he can."

Seated the stand are representatives of each of the six children of Hyrum, Jerusha and Mary who lived to adulthood--Lovina, John, Jerusha, Sarah, Joseph F., and Martha Ann, all of whom came west with the saints. Their names are on your program and they will identify themselves.

May we, collectively and individually remain faithful to the sacred memory of Hyrum Smith and his family by being a dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ, as he was, so that his devotion, sacrifice, and martyrdom will not be blotted out nor in vain.

As the president of the Hyrum Smith Family Organization  
--(Blessing and Bear Testimony)