

President Gordon B. Hinckley's talk given at Hyrum Smith's 200th Birthday
February 13, 2000, in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square in Salt Lake City

My beloved brethren and sisters, it's a great privilege and great opportunity and a great honor to be here. When I heard of this occasion I resolved I'd try to get here. I'm not a descendant of Hyrum Smith, I'm not a Smith. But I am a great admirer, and one who loves the name of Hyrum, the martyred brother of the Prophet Joseph. It was my privilege a few years ago to dedicate the monuments in Carthage of Joseph and Hyrum who were martyred there. What a peaceful and delightful place Carthage has become in contrast to the that place of great infamy that it was on the day of June 27th, 1844, when both of them were killed by the assassins bullets by a mob of painted faces to cover their identity, who in a very cowardly and brutal way took the lives of these great sons of our Father in Heaven, whom he had called in this dispensation to open the work of the restoration.

The great responsibility, the great honor, the great obligation rests with Joseph. But I think Joseph would have had a very difficult time had he not had the absolute loyalty, the love and respect of his older brother Hyrum. Who in every circumstance, stood by him, defended him, helped him, spoke up for him, and assisted him in every way possible, as he moved forward the work of the founding of this, the church and kingdom of God. Two hundred years has passed since his birth in Tunbridge, Vermont. And it's fitting that you his posterity should pause to honor him. I hope that this service tonight has engraved upon your minds an appreciation such as you never had before for the nobility, the strength and the capacity, and I repeat the loyalty of this Joseph's brother who was his protector and his counselor and his help in every circumstance.

In life they were not divided and in death they were not separated. So declared John Taylor, who knew them as well as anyone could have known them. God bless his memory.

And I wish to say in harmony with the charge which Eldred Smith has given you that there rests upon you a tremendous and a binding responsibility to walk in the ways that Hyrum walked, with faith in the divinity of this the work of the Lord; with love for this great cause with respect for those who established it and with resolution within your heart to strengthen it in whatever capacity you may be called to serve.

To me it's rather singular thing but I think an indication of the Love which the Lord has for Hyrum and I think because of his brother's advocacy of Hyrum, that this is the only case in the history of the church where his posterity has been called to preside over the Church and that was not in one man but in two men, President Joseph F. Smith and President Joseph Fielding Smith. What a great recognition given by the Lord of the fidelity, strength and faithfulness of this remarkable brother. God bless his memory to our great good. May we never forget it, may we remember with appreciation. And may we in this generation walk in the light of his strength, and power, and capacity, I humbly pray as I leave my blessing with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.