

# KEYNOTE ADDRESSES



# Joseph F. Smith and the Importance of Family

I am grateful and humbled at the invitation to speak to you at this year's symposium. We are reviewing the life and teachings of a great man, the sixth President of the Church, President Joseph F. Smith. After looking at the list of subjects and those who will teach of his remarkable accomplishments, I have wondered what I can say to add to our understanding of the life of this very choice son of God.

In my office are the sculpted busts of the Prophet Joseph, his brother Hyrum, and Hyrum's youngest son, Joseph F. Smith. Joseph F. Smith is my mother's grandfather. His son Hyrum Mack Smith is my grandfather. As I look at the faces of these mighty prophets, I think I hear them saying, "Russell, get going! Do more; work a little harder while you still have time."

I pray that we will have the Spirit of the Lord to be with us as I share my thoughts about the remarkable life of Joseph F. Smith, which was molded by the hand of God. He served for seventeen years as prophet and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Because he was the last President of the Church to have personally known the Prophet Joseph Smith,

## *Joseph F. Smith and the Importance of Family*

his life—spanning the years from Nauvoo to November of 1918 in the Salt Lake Valley—has been chronicled time and time again. The more I have read about him, the more I am amazed at how he did all that he did in his eighty years of life.

I acknowledge that much of what I say you may have read or heard before. Some I will take from his own words and some from what others have written. My thoughts are centered on the importance of family as lived and taught by Joseph F. Smith.

As I have pondered over what I would say, it became clear to me that to really come to know President Joseph F. Smith, we need to know about his forefathers from whom he received the faithful, believing blood that flowed through his veins.

President Brigham Young declared the following in 1859:

It was decreed in the councils of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that [the Prophet Joseph Smith] should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people and receive the fulness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eyes upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father's father, and upon their progenitors clear back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, from the flood to Enoch and from Enoch to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man. He was foreordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, we know from the Book of Mormon that it was revealed to the prophet Lehi that Joseph the son of Jacob, who was sold to merchants on their way to Egypt, saw the day of this final dispensation and spoke of a choice seer to be raised up: “And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation” (2 Nephi 3:15).

In the year of 1638, Robert Smith, a sturdy yeoman of England, immigrated to the New World, the land of promise. He settled in Essex County, Massachusetts, and afterwards married Mary French. Thus the beginning of the believing blood, as prophesied by Joseph of old, was anchored in the United States of America. Robert and Mary had a son they named Samuel, who also had a son he named

## JOSEPH F. SMITH: REFLECTIONS ON THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

Samuel. The second Samuel's son was Asael Smith, who married Mary Duty. Their son Joseph Smith Sr. was born July 12, 1771.<sup>2</sup> It was Joseph and Hyrum's grandfather Asael who made this statement: "It has been borne in upon my soul that one of my descendants will promulgate a work to revolutionize the world of religious faith."<sup>3</sup>

There is no question in my mind that our Father in Heaven influenced Lucy Mack to marry Joseph Smith Sr. so they could become the parents of Joseph, his brother Hyrum, and their siblings. I include Hyrum also as a prophet, who stood valiantly at the side of Joseph and who is the father of Joseph F. Smith. I do not have time to detail all of their history, but Hyrum and his wife Mary Fielding demonstrated in their lives an absolute devotion and unwavering conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that through the Prophet Joseph Smith the fullness of his gospel was once again restored to the earth.

This brief ancestral sketch would not be complete without pointing out that Lucy Mack, the daughter of Solomon Mack, is the mother that the Lord had his eye upon from the beginning.

John Lathrop, Lucy's fourth-great-grandfather, was one of the brave reformers of Christendom in England. His is a story all of its own, but for my purpose in establishing why Joseph F. Smith became such a great spiritual giant and powerful Church leader, you only need to know that John Lathrop strongly believed in the Bible and the right of all people to have their own copy. After several years in prison for teaching what he believed, he was banished from England. He and his children and some of his followers settled in Massachusetts. It is amazing to know that many of his posterity were members of the Church in Nauvoo, and even more are members today.

The Lord moved Joseph and Lucy Mack step by step, failure by failure, to a plot of ground in Palmyra, New York. The story of their family struggle in establishing a homestead in Palmyra is a story that we are all familiar with. But to me, moving the Smiths to Palmyra was a fulfillment of their destiny.

This believing blood of the Smiths and the Macks flowed through the veins of their children. Surely the Lord was preparing the Prophet's family to recognize the truth and accept the responsibility of supporting Joseph in his call to restore to the earth the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I wish we could talk more about the many powerful examples of faith manifested by our sweet but feisty Lucy Mack Smith. Her faith performed miracles.

## *Joseph F. Smith and the Importance of Family*

How grateful we are that when Joseph Smith returned to his home after his experience in the sacred grove and his “mother inquired what the matter was, [Joseph] replied, ‘Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off. . . . I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true’” (Joseph Smith—History 1:20).

Also, how grateful we are for the believing blood of Father Smith when in 1823, after having been tutored through the night by Moroni, Joseph went to work in the field with him but was unable to continue. He was sent back to the house. As he attempted to cross the fence out of the field, he fell to the ground. Once again, Moroni appeared to him and, as the Prophet explained, “commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received. I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger” (Joseph Smith—History 1:48–50). I shudder to think what could have happened had Joseph’s parents questioned him and cast doubt on his instructions from God.

Now, why is it important to understand at least this much about the believing faith and trust in God of the forefathers of Joseph F. Smith? It is because of the faithful heritage he was raised in that he was so susceptible to the promptings of the Spirit, through which he gained an unwavering testimony, which I quote:

As a child I knew the Prophet Joseph Smith. As a child I have listened to him preach the gospel that God had committed to his charge and care. As a child I was familiar in his home, in his household, as I was familiar under my own father’s roof. I have retained the witness of the Spirit that I was imbued with, as a child, and that I received from my sainted mother, the firm belief that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; that he was inspired as no other man in this generation, or for centuries before, had been inspired; that he had been chosen of God to lay the foundations of God’s Kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

We do not understand all of the reasons things happen in our lives, but it has always been impressive to me to know that Parley P. Pratt, under extreme personal hardship, accepted the call of Joseph Smith to go on a mission to Ontario, Canada. There he found and baptized John Taylor, Joseph Fielding, and his sisters Mary and Mercy Fielding. We remember that Hyrum returned home from a mission after his beloved wife Jerusha died, leaving him with five living children, including a baby, and no mother for them. Shortly thereafter, heaven sent

## JOSEPH F. SMITH: REFLECTIONS ON THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

Mary Fielding to become Hyrum's wife to help him care for his family. Together they had two additional children, the oldest a boy they named Joseph Fielding, after the Prophet Joseph and Mary's brother Joseph Fielding. The little girl was named Martha Ann.

Mary Fielding, with the background of a schoolteacher from England, certainly taught the children the basic skills of reading and writing, but more importantly, she instilled in them faith and trust in God. Volumes have been written about this good, faithful woman—a woman who also had believing blood that was now mingled with that of Hyrum's, to flow through the veins of their only son, Joseph F. Smith.

Joseph F. Smith is a hero to me. His life is a legacy of faith we would all do well to emulate. There are so many wonderful childhood stories about this special little boy. My heart is touched in reading his account of a homecoming:

My mother was anticipating the return of my father from somewhere for he and Joseph the prophet had been in concealment away from the mob, and I was looking for them. I went out on the bank of the river close to the old printing office. I sat on the bank of the river, and presently I saw a skiff starting out from the other side of the river. The river there is a mile wide. They rowed on across the stream until they landed close to where I stood. Out of that little skiff the Prophet and my father alighted and walked up the hill. I joined the hand of my father and we went home to my mother, to my father's home. Then both went into the house and sat down; they chatted and talked with each other and while my father was changing his clothes—I suppose his collar and cuffs and something of that kind, probably—Joseph the prophet sat there. He took me on his knee and trotted me a little and then he looked at me a little more carefully and finally he said, "Hyrum, what is the matter with Joseph here?"

"Well," he says, "I don't know; what do you think is the matter?"

"Why, he looks as though he had not a drop of blood in him."

"Oh," Father says, "that is because he has been living on milk only," for up to that time—I was between five and six years of age—I had never eaten a thing harder than milk; I was living on it. I do not know whether that had the effect of making me white or pale, but that was the condition I was in, and that was the remark the Prophet made. I never forgot it.<sup>5</sup>

## *Joseph F. Smith and the Importance of Family*

Joseph F. personally knew the leaders that we all reverence so much. He knew them, and they knew him from his childhood.

To me there is no more tender scene in our Church history than that of Hyrum's last embrace of young Joseph F. President Smith recounted that experience while on a visit to Nauvoo with Charles and Preston Nibley. Of that visit in 1906, Preston Nibley wrote: "He pointed out to us the place in the road where he had stood as he watched his father and 'Uncle Joseph' ride away to Carthage on that fateful day in June, 1844. 'This is the exact spot,' he said, 'where I stood when the brethren came riding up on their way to Carthage.



*Drawing of Hyrum Smith, undated, copy in George Edward Anderson photograph collection, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.*

Without getting off his horse father leaned over in his saddle and picked me up off the ground. He kissed me good-bye and put me down again, and I saw him ride away."<sup>6</sup> On that same trip, the brethren visited Carthage Jail. This was the first time President Smith had been to the jail. The person in charge pointed to the floor and said, "That stain is the blood of Hyrum Smith." "[President] Smith walked over and sat on the bed. He put his hands over his face and convulsively wept, until Brother Nibley could see the tears dripping through his fingers. He then said, "Charlie, take me out of here!"<sup>7</sup>

President Smith also spoke of seeing his father and Uncle Joseph as they were lying in their coffins following the Martyrdom: "I remember the night of the murder when one of the brethren came from Carthage and knocked on our window after dark and called to my mother, 'Sister Smith, your husband has been killed.'" He remembered his mother's scream on hearing this dreadful news, and her moans and cries throughout the night. He pointed out the room in the old home of the Prophet Joseph where the bodies of the martyrs lay in their coffins, after they had been brought from Carthage and dressed for burial: "I remember my mother lifting me up to look upon [them]."<sup>8</sup>

## JOSEPH F. SMITH: REFLECTIONS ON THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

From Dan Jones's diary we learn more about the sorrowful scene in Nauvoo, everyone sad, all the stores closed:

[When] I reached the house of the late Joseph Smith . . . [Hyrum and Joseph] lay in their coffins side by side, majestic men as they . . . labored together, shoulder to shoulder, to build the kingdom of Immanuel; eternal love bound them steadfastly to each other and to their God until death; and now, my eyes beheld the blood of the two godly martyrs mingling in one pool in the middle of the floor, their elderly mother, godly and sorrowful, . . . a hand on each one of her sons, . . . her heart nearly broken by the excruciating agony and the indescribable grief. At the head of the deceased sat the dear wife of each one and around their father stood four of Joseph's little children and six of Hyrum's children crying out intermittently, "My dear father. . . Oh, my father." And from the hearts of the mothers, "My husband killed," and the grey-haired mother groaning pitifully, "Oh, my sons, my sons."<sup>9</sup>

Still, Mother Lucy Mack Smith reported that even in the midst of so much grief and despair there was comfort, and even peace. As she cried in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken this family?" she reported hearing a voice reply, "I have taken them unto myself, that they might have rest." Then, as she looked upon the mortal remains of her two sons, she said, "I seemed almost to hear them say, 'Mother, weep not for us, we have overcome the world by love; we carried to them the gospel, that their souls might be saved; they slew us for our testimony, and thus placed us beyond their power; their ascendancy is for a moment, ours is an eternal triumph.'"<sup>10</sup>

The memory of the death of a beloved father and an adored uncle at such a tender age must have returned many times to Joseph F.'s mind, anchoring him to the eternal spirit of man. He said, "I was instructed to believe in the divinity of the mission of Jesus Christ. . . . I was taught it from my father, from the Prophet Joseph Smith, through my mother . . . and all my boyhood days and all my years in the world I have clung to that belief."<sup>11</sup>

Persecution persisted, as we all know, and at age eight Joseph F. Smith had the responsibility of driving one of the family's ox teams from Nauvoo across Iowa to Winter Quarters. At age nine he drove this team the rest of the way to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving in Salt Lake September 23, 1848. We could spend



## *Joseph F. Smith and the Importance of Family*

all night strengthening our own faith by observing the spiritual experiences on their journey west. How God blessed that family!

The strength of Mary Fielding Smith is a symposium of its own, but for this occasion, with great tribute and reverence I express my love to Mary Fielding Smith, a mother and teacher worthy of our Heavenly Father's love and total and complete acceptance. After two months of illness, she died at fifty-one years of age, leaving behind her two young children. Joseph F. was just thirteen, and he describes himself in a note to a childhood friend: "I was almost like a comet, a fiery meteor without attraction of gravitation to keep me balanced or guide me."<sup>12</sup> This was evident in an incident at school two years later during the winter of 1853–54. The schoolmaster took out a leather strap to punish Joseph's sister Martha Ann over some small infraction. "Don't whip her with that," Joseph cried. "At that he came at me and was going to whip me, but instead of whipping me, I licked him, good and plenty."<sup>13</sup>

This incident both ended Joseph's short formal education and launched his long ecclesiastical career. His aunt Mercy, whom he loved, along with the leadership of the Church—President Brigham Young, President Heber C. Kimball, and Elder George A. Smith—were watching out for him. I can almost hear them wondering, "What should we do with Hyrum's boy, Joseph?" In the next general conference he was called, at age fifteen, to serve a mission in Hawaii.

Toward the end of his life, Joseph F. said this of his journey to his mission in Hawaii: "I lay there and looked up at the stars, rather a homesick youth, realizing for the first time in my life that I was just about to cut loose entirely from all the associations that I loved and honored and revered in all the world; to go out into the world—I knew not where, nor did I know the circumstances in which I would be placed."<sup>14</sup>

He also said, "My four years mission to the Sandwich Islands restored my equilibrium and fixed the laws and metes and bounds which have governed my subsequent life."<sup>15</sup>

Nothing was very easy for Joseph F. Smith. He faced test after test, all of which prepared him for the many responsibilities he would have in Church leadership. The legacy that he left with the Saints of Hawaii would again take far more time than we have tonight. However, there is another most tender experience from his life that demonstrates his great love for his dear friends of the islands:

## JOSEPH F. SMITH: REFLECTIONS ON THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

Charles W. Nibley, who was perhaps President Smith's closest friend and was the Presiding Bishop of the Church, describes the reunion of President Smith with his beloved Hawaiian mama. Holding a few bananas as a gift, a frail ninety-year-old blind woman approached calling "Iosepa, Iosepa."

Instantly, when he saw her, he ran to her and clasped her in his arms, hugged her and kissed her over and over again, patting her on the head and saying, "Mama, mama, my dear old mama!"

And with tears streaming down his cheeks, he turned to me and said, "Charlie, she nursed me when I was a boy, sick and without anyone to care for me. She took me in and was a mother to me."<sup>16</sup>

Ten years ago, President Eyring, who was then Commissioner of Education, and I were invited to launch the *Iosepa*, named in honor of President Joseph F. Smith. This canoe was built by the students of BYU–Hawaii. We signed our names on the inside of the hull before launching it off to its adventures in the sea. I have thought since then that the mission to Hawaii as a boy launched President Joseph F. Smith into a lifetime of service, including five missions for the Church, either as a missionary or as a mission president, for a total of thirteen years, and as a defender of the Saints, standing side by side with Porter Rockwell and very likely my father's grandfather, Henry Ballard, when they intercepted Johnston's army. He served fifty-two years in the presiding councils of the Church as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, a counselor in the First Presidency, and as President of the Church. He also presided over the stake in Davis County. As President of the Church, he also presided over the Salt Lake Temple, the Sunday School, and the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association.

His management of financial affairs freed the Church from a million dollars of bond debt. He began the acquisition of historical sites and, with his missionary zeal, developed visitors' centers and an information center on Temple Square. He authorized the construction of the Church Administration Building and the Hotel Utah. He was a practical visionary, a builder, a fearless missionary and a witness of the Restoration. As a gospel teacher, he made the plan of salvation clear and understandable to all who read his discourses. He introduced family home evenings as the place where the gospel is best taught.

He moved the Church forward under extreme difficulties and faced brutal personal attacks, including those by the United States Congress. He was physically

*Joseph F. Smith and the Importance of Family*



*Joseph F. Smith portrait, oil on canvas, 1915. The October 2, 1915, edition of the Deseret Evening News indicates: "Mr. Salzbrener the artist . . . came from Dresden, Germany, studied many years under the noted artist Hoffman and also under the sculptor Schilling. This is the second portrait he has painted of Pres. Smith." Courtesy of Church History Library.*

## JOSEPH F. SMITH: REFLECTIONS ON THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

strong and loved sports, including golf—to which I can relate—preferring to participate rather than just observe.

With all that President Joseph F. Smith accomplished in his ministry of building up and moving The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints forward, there was nothing more important and precious to him than his love for his wives and his forty-eight children, five of whom were adopted. He repeatedly taught that “the family organization lies at the basis of all true government.”<sup>17</sup>

He lived by what he taught. Here are just a few examples that give an insight into his constant teaching and concern for home and family:

There can be no genuine happiness separate and apart from the home, and every effort made to sanctify and preserve its influence is uplifting to those who toil and sacrifice for its establishment. Men and women often seek to substitute some other life for that of the home; they would make themselves believe that the home means restraint; that the highest liberty is the fullest opportunity to move about at will. There is no happiness without service, and there is no service greater than that which converts the home into a divine institution, and which promotes and preserves family life.

The home is what needs reforming. Try today, and tomorrow, to make a change in your home by praying twice a day with your family; call on your children and your wife to pray with you. Ask a blessing upon every meal you eat. Spend ten minutes in reading a chapter from the words of the Lord in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, before you retire, or before you go to your daily toil. Feed your spiritual selves at home, as well as in public places. Let love, and peace, and the Spirit of the Lord, kindness, charity, sacrifice for others, abound in your families. . . . Let our meetings, schools and organizations, instead of being our only or leading teachers, be supplements to our teachings.

Let the parents in Zion give their children something to do that they may be taught the arts of industry, and equipped to carry responsibility when it is thrust upon them. Train them in some useful vocation that their living may be assured when they commence in life for themselves. Remember, the Lord has said that “the idler shall not eat the bread of the laborer,” but all in Zion should be industrious. Neither should they be given to loud laughter, light and foolish

## *Joseph F. Smith and the Importance of Family*

speeches, worldly pride and lustful desires, for these are not only unbecoming, but grievous sins in the sight of the Lord.<sup>18</sup>

Joseph F.'s love for his children is reflected in these tender words at the death of his firstborn child, three-year-old Mercy Josephine, whom he affectionately referred to as "Dodo":

I am desolate, my home seems desolate and almost dreary. . . . My own sweet Dodo is gone! I can scarcely believe it and my heart asks, *can it be?* I look in vain, I listen, no sound, I wander through the rooms, all are vacant, lonely, desolate, deserted. I look down the garden walk, peer around the house, look here and there for a glimpse of a little golden, sunny head and rosy cheeks, but no, alas, no pattering little footsteps. No beaming little black eyes sparkling with love for papa; no sweet little enquiring voice, . . . no soft dimpled hands clasping me around the neck, no sweet rosy lips returning in childish innocence my fond embrace and kisses, but a vacant little chair.<sup>19</sup>

Reflecting on his father's love for family, his son, my grandfather Hyrum Mack Smith, said:

He always has been very conscientious in the care and protection that he bestowed upon his wives and his children, and religiously endeavored to instruct them in the ways of truth and righteousness. He has taught his children from their infancy to be truthful and honest, to be virtuous and chaste, to be kind and just, and merciful, to be temperate and sober, and obedient . . . There was no favoritism, no injustice, no partiality shown . . . He loved them all with a love akin to the love of God for His children.<sup>20</sup>

I talked to Florence Jacobsen, a granddaughter of President Smith who was seven years old when her grandpapa died. Florence was nearly ninety-nine, but with clear voice and recollection, she told me of the times her family would enter the Beehive House from State Street, climb the stairs to the second floor where Grandpapa would greet them from his chair, "Come in, my darlings." He would tell them to look in the drawer where he always kept candy for the children. He would kiss each family member, and Florence recalled how good his beard smelled because it was always so clean. He generally dressed in light suits, sometimes white ones. He was neat in his appearance.

## JOSEPH F. SMITH: REFLECTIONS ON THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

My mother also often talked about sitting on his lap and how his beard tickled her face when he kissed her. Oh, how the children loved their grandpapa!

As I mentioned earlier, Joseph F. Smith sought understanding and knowledge about the great plan of happiness, especially as it pertains to eternal life. His unwavering love for his father and his mother, I believe, focused his thoughts about eternity. Perhaps some of the most important conference addresses ever given by a General Authority are those of President Smith in April 1916 and October 1918. The last thirty months of his life represent an era of unusual spiritual enlightenment. From his words, the heavens seemed to be very close and his view of spiritual realities were expressed clearly, for as he said on October 4, 1918, "I will not, I dare not, attempt to enter upon many things that are resting upon my mind this morning, and I shall postpone until some future time, the Lord being willing, my attempt to tell you some of the things that are in my mind, and that dwell in my heart. I have not lived alone these last five months. I have dwelt in the spirit of prayer, of supplication, of faith, and of determination; and I have had my communication with the Spirit of the Lord continuously."<sup>21</sup>

According to the President's son Joseph Fielding Smith, the prophet was here expressing the fact that during the past half year he had been the recipient of numerous manifestations, some of which he had shared with his son both before and after the conference. One of these manifestations, the vision of the redemption of the dead, had been received just the day before, on October 3, and was recorded immediately following the close of the conference.<sup>22</sup>

President Smith died just a few weeks following that general conference of October 1918. Only a graveside service at the Salt Lake City Cemetery was held because of the flu epidemic. Those who attended did so wearing masks. Sister Jacobson was there, as was my mother, who was almost fifteen years old.

General conference in April was postponed to June 1919. President Grant instructed that the sermons were to express love and appreciation for President Joseph F. Smith. Speaker after speaker told of the love they had for their dear prophet and president. No words spoken that conference were more significant than those of Melvin J. Ballard, newly called member of the Twelve, called to fill the vacancy left at the death of President Joseph F. Smith. I quote:

I recall my early recollections of President Smith with a good deal of pleasure—because I admired him, he was to me my ideal, I tried in my life, as I became



## *Joseph F. Smith and the Importance of Family*

acquainted with him, to be as he was. I knew as a child, for the Lord revealed it unto me, that President Smith would some day preside over this Church; and in connection with that I saw many things that President Smith would do; and when, last October he stood before the congregations of the Saints, feeble and weak as he was, my soul was filled with great sorrow, because I knew that all that the Lord had for President Smith to do had been done. That which I saw as a child was fulfilled, finished, completed. And yet there was a feeling of great regret that we should soon have to part with him and let him go on to the work which the Father has prepared him to do in that realm where he is now.

It was my privilege, I presume, to deliver the last public address that President Smith ever listened to, being the last speaker of the last Conference of the Church. And I recall, as I had concluded, he grasped my hand and pressed it and gave me a blessing that I shall not forget, for my whole soul was thrilled with his blessing and with his love.

I bear witness that he was a man who loved the souls of the children of men in the world—not only those who belong to the Church; for no man has done more, than he, looking toward the establishment of the work of the Lord among the nations of the earth.<sup>23</sup>

So the Church said farewell for a season to the man and the prophet of God who bridged the days of Nauvoo in the nineteenth century to the Salt Lake Valley in the twentieth century. No leader has been more beloved as an Apostle and President of the Church by members and strangers alike. Nor has his family forgotten him. Every year near his birthday, we come together in a family home evening, filling the Monument Park Stake Center with his posterity. All come to remember him and to strengthen our resolve to live as he expects all of us to do.

In September of 1983, I stood by the bedside of my mother shortly before she passed away. Having suffered with Alzheimer's for several years, she did not recognize her family. She could not speak to us. While I held her hand and softly talked to her, she opened her eyes and said, "Papa, Grandpapa."

I asked, "Mother, are your father and grandfather here?"

"Yes," she said, pointing up, "Right there."

Joseph F. Smith's "darlings" were never far from his thoughts, and with his son Hyrum Mack they watched over their family here on earth from the heavens above, anticipating the joy of being joined forever as family.

## JOSEPH F. SMITH: REFLECTIONS ON THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

May God bless us with increased faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. May we strive always to keep His commandments so all that has been taught and promised by President Joseph F. Smith may come to pass in our own lives and the lives of our families.

### Notes

1. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954), 108; see also *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 7:289–90.
2. *Church History in the Fulness of Times* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 15–17.
3. Quoted in Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 2.
4. Craig K. Manscill, "Life of Joseph F. Smith," *The Presidents of the Church: The Lives and Teachings of the Modern Prophets*, ed. Craig K. Manscill, Robert C. Freeman, and Dennis A. Wright (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2008), 150.
5. Joseph F. Smith, "Boyhood Recollections of President Smith," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, April 1916, 57.
6. Preston Nibley, *Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 183.
7. Blaine Yorgason, *From Orphaned Boy to Prophet of God: The Story of Joseph F. Smith* (Ogden, UT: Living Scriptures, 2001), 356.
8. Preston Nibley, *Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 183.
9. Dan Jones, "The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith and His Brother Hyrum," *BYU Studies* 24, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 93.
10. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1853), 324–25.
11. Manscill, "Life of Joseph F. Smith," 150; *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith*, comp. John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1919), 494.
12. Manscill, "Life of Joseph F. Smith," 152.
13. Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith: Patriarch and Preacher, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 26–28.
14. F. W. Otterstrom, "A Journey to the South," *Improvement Era*, December 1917, 106.
15. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), xv.
16. Charles W. Nibley, "Reminiscences," in *Gospel Doctrine*, 519.
17. *Teachings . . . Joseph F. Smith*, 385.
18. *Gospel Doctrine*, 296–301.
19. Arthur R. Bassett, "Joseph F. Smith: Families and Generation Gaps," *New Era*, January 1972, 43.
20. Hyrum Mack Smith, in Conference Report, April 1911, 26–27.
21. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, October 1918, 2.
22. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith: The Sixth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 466.
23. Melvin J. Ballard, in Conference Report, June 1919, 68.