

the devil I would not have him either, because I would be afraid of being double-crossed.

May the Lord help us to be consistent. May he help us to think straight. Let's remember that "an honest man is the noblest work of God." The closing remarks of President Grant's message to us at this conference pleaded with us to think soundly. May the Lord help us to be consistent in our thinking, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH F. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

Inasmuch as this is a priesthood meeting, and inasmuch as at our last semi-annual conference I spoke at the priesthood meeting, this was the one session at which I expected to be comfortable. I have learned another lesson in jumping at conclusions.

Since this is a priesthood meeting, if I may have the assistance of my Father in heaven, I should like to attempt, at least, to make a few observations that may answer some queries you have, and I feel safe in assuming that some of these queries are common, because of the frequency with which they have been put to me.

THE NECESSITY FOR WITNESSES

Oliver Cowdery occupied a unique position in the Church. He was called to be a special witness, and that is according to law. The Lord has said time and again that his word is to be established in the mouths of two or three witnesses. It is significant that the Prophet Joseph Smith did not receive the priesthood by himself, but he, together with Oliver Cowdery, received the priesthood, and it was Oliver Cowdery's calling to bear witness to these things.

The Savior himself, according to the law, required a witness, and his Father in person, bore witness to the divinity of his Son. Together they appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith. You will find ample Biblical support for the necessity of witnesses.

Oliver Cowdery did not remain faithful, and his position was given to Hyrum Smith.

And again, verily I say unto you, let my servant William be appointed, ordained, and anointed, as a counselor unto my servant Joseph, in the room of my servant Hyrum, that my servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, which was appointed unto him by his father, by blessing and also by right; That from henceforth he shall hold the keys of the patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people. That whoever he blesses shall be blessed, and whoever he curses shall be cursed; that whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Doc. & Cov. 124:91-93.)

Hyrum Smith was called to be the patriarch to the Church, but he was also called to take Oliver Cowdery's place as special witness to the Prophet.

... From this time forth I appoint unto him that he shall be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph; That he may act in concert also with my servant Joseph; and that he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive, and be crowned with the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and gifts of the priesthood, that once were put upon him that was my servant Oliver Cowdery; That my servant Hyrum may bear record of the things which I shall show unto him, that his name may be had in honorable remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever. (Doc. & Cov. 124:94-96.)

That calling was over and beyond his office of patriarch. He was a special witness to his brother, and was shown the keys of presidency. Now this situation has been unique in the history of the Church. Since that time that has not been necessary. There are thousands of persons who now are witnesses of the divinity of the Prophet Joseph Smith, so that the office that Hyrum Smith held was more than the office which subsequent patriarchs have held.

SPECIFIC DUTIES OF PATRIARCHS

Patriarchal blessings are sacred things. It is significant to me that in the revelation, the great revelation on priesthood, the word "patriarch" itself is not used. I have pondered that considerably.

It is the duty of the Twelve, in all large branches of the church, to ordain evangelical ministers, as they shall be designated unto them by revelation. The order of this priesthood was confirmed, to be handed down from father to son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promises were made. (Doc. & Cov. 107:39-40.)

Then the order of this priesthood, beginning with Adam, is chronicled in the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Now we know that these men were patriarchs. I am not sure that I know precisely why the words "evangelical ministers" were used, rather than the word "patriarchs." It seems, however, significant to me that the term here used suggests very definitely the spiritual nature of the patriarchal office. It is not an administrative office, it is not an executive office, it is a spiritual office.

The old patriarchs, of course, lived under a patriarchal system of government. The head of the family was, actually the head of their government, and that continued for a good many generations. We no longer live under a patriarchal form of government. Our civil government is greatly different. The Prophet Joseph Smith, in a meeting with the Twelve, explains specifically that "evangelical ministers" means "patriarchs."

If I remember correctly, he gave these instructions on the

27th of June, 1839. I may be wrong. One of the duties of a patriarch in these days is to declare the lineage of the persons receiving blessings. I am of the opinion that that means much more than simply a declaration of fact. Some persons who have received patriarchal blessings and who have not had their lineage declared have shown a good deal of concern, wondering about it.

I must confess, for myself, I have never been able quite to understand why we should be so much concerned about merely not knowing. Certainly this declaration of lineage is a more important thing than simply giving an individual a psychological satisfaction as to his heritage.

A RESPONSIBILITY IN LINEAGE

I believe that a declaration of lineage, by the authority of the priesthood is also a declaration of, and an assignment to, a responsibility. When one has his lineage declared, he is given a responsibility to fulfill, according to that heritage.

On the very day that the Prophet explained that evangelical ministers meant patriarchs, he also explained some of the functions of the Comforter. He explained the difference between the two comforters, and he explained that one of the functions of the Holy Ghost is to purge the Gentiles of their Gentile blood. Now we know that today heritages are mixed. Pure racial strains—certainly in the Occident—are almost impossible to discover. Bloods are mixed but a Gentile, born of full Gentile lineage, being converted to the gospel, accepting the gospel, and receiving the Holy Ghost, through his faithfulness, according to the Prophet's words—and these are not my words—according to the Prophet's words, will have his Gentile blood completely purged, and he will become literally of the blood of Israel.

I think that fact is something for patriarchs prayerfully to ponder.

A FATHER'S BLESSING

The question has arisen a number of times recently whether or not fathers are entitled to give their children patriarchal blessings. The answer is yes and no. After all, if you are going to deal technically merely in the meanings of words, a patriarchal blessing means a father's blessing. A patriarch is literally a paternal ruler. That is what the word means, and any father in the Church who holds the higher priesthood, may, in the authority of that priesthood give unto his child a blessing, and that is a patriarchal blessing, in that it is a father's blessing.

But according to the ruling of the Church, that blessing is not to be recorded as having come from an ordained patriarch, because it does not come from an ordained patriarch. The business of declaring lineage and giving patriarchal blessings, these

blessings given by one who is ordained a patriarch; that is the privilege of the ordained patriarch. Such blessings are recorded and kept in the Church historian's library.

MORE THAN ONE PATRIARCHAL BLESSING

There are some who would like to have more than one patriarchal blessing. In the early days of the Church many people received many patriarchal blessings, or at least blessings by patriarchs. The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve have advised that one person receive one patriarchal blessing. Now, that is not one of the laws of the Medes and Persians. There are and have been a few cases that have come to my attention where persons have received patriarchal blessings when they were very young, and where they have felt that the blessings have been mostly fulfilled, and they would like another patriarchal blessing.

The advice of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve is to the effect that under normal circumstances one person should receive one patriarchal blessing. I think that wherever there is to be an exception, the recommendation for that exception should be made very, very carefully, and bishops and stake presidents should exercise care in that regard. If the bishop and the stake president concerned, after careful and very thorough consideration, feel that conditions warrant it, they may issue a signed recommendation to their patriarch to give an additional patriarchal blessing to the person recommended. In such rare cases, where the lineage has already been declared, there is no need, of course, for repetition.

A PATRIARCHAL BLESSING FOR INDIVIDUAL COMFORT

A patriarchal blessing is a very personal thing. Sometimes zealous teachers in auxiliary organizations develop enthusiasm in classes for patriarchal blessings, and there have been cases where whole classes have gone to receive their patriarchal blessings at one time. This brethren, would better be avoided. It is commendable, on the part of teachers of children, to talk about patriarchal blessings, to explain the importance of them and their value, but the individual himself, if he wants it, should first obtain his proper recommendation, and then make his own appointment with the patriarch, and having received that blessing he should hold it sacred. It is not a thing to be published; it is not for everybody to see; it is for his comfort, for his strengthening. It is his blessing.

Every one of you who has had a patriarchal blessing probably has a testimony about it, and almost daily one of the great joys comes to me—as it does to every patriarch—and also one of the terrifying things about the position, is the testimonies of persons who have received patriarchal blessings.

BLESSING UPON HIS SON

Let us teach our children the value of them, let us teach them what they are, let us instill into them a desire to get them.

I think one of the biggest thrills that I have had was a few weeks ago. One day on my appointment sheet I read merely "appointment." There was no name. I asked my secretary who that was, and she mumbled something rather inarticulately. At the appointed hour, my little nine-year-old boy came into my office, beaming all over. On his own initiative he had gone to his bishop and the president of the stake and he brought me his recommendation to have his daddy give him a patriarchal blessing.

I acknowledge my weakness; many times a day I am aware of my utter dependence upon our Father in heaven. I ask you, my brethren for your sustaining prayers. I bespeak for every patriarch in the Church the prayers of our brethren.

God give us vision in these times when nations are being sacrificed upon the altar of righteousness. Give us the power to see and the strength to do, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir male chorus sang "The Holy City."

ELDER CHARLES A. CALLIS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I must not encroach on the time of the First Presidency in this important meeting. May I read a story that was published in *The Reader's Digest* of April 1944:

"THAT'S THE SPIRIT"

The bomber had been almost ripped apart by German cannon. The ball turret gunner was badly wounded and stuck in the blister on the underside of the fuselage. Crew men worked frantically to extricate the youngster but there was nothing they could do. They began to jump.

The terror-stricken lad screamed in fear, as he saw what was happening. The last man to jump heard the remaining crewman, a gunner, say, "Take it easy, kid, we'll take this ride together."

And they took that ride of death together, and together they stood at the gates of God, the selfsame God who died for all men.

A PLEA FOR UNSELFISHNESS

Brethren, in this hour of trial, we must all take the ride together, eschewing all selfishness and personal advantage. You ask for a postwar program. The Lord gave it to us. It is as follows:

Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls; and this shall be your lamentation