

told once again in the Doctrine and Covenants in the 101st section:

According to the laws and constitution of the people, which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles;

That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.

Therefore, it is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another.

And for this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood. (*Ibid.*, 101:77-80.)

Can we accept that as one of the sacred tenets of our faith and be derelict in our duties toward our nation? The answer to me seems to be self-evident. The Apostle Paul of old said,

For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? (I Cor. 14:8.)

We must have leadership in this nation whose voice will be clear; whose virtue, clarity, and certainty will give us the assurance that the course the government pursued under their leadership is right. Then we can put our whole heart and soul back of our government and sustain those who preside in government and feel toward them even as we do toward those who have been divinely chosen to guide and direct the affairs of the Church.

## ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

### *Patriarch to the Church*

**I** PRAY that I shall have your faith and prayers, my brothers and sisters, while I occupy this position, as has been the case with those who have preceded me. And I thank my brethren who have offered prayers at the beginning of these meetings in behalf of all who have to talk to you, that the Spirit of the Lord will be with us.

I hope and pray, my brethren and sisters, that we will not feel that politics has become so degraded that we are too good to participate. If any of us believe politics to be in that kind of state, we need only to enter into politics, go into it with our honesty and our integrity and our devotion to truth and to righteousness, and the standards will be raised. We cannot expect in this country a better government than the leaders are good, and so if we want a good government we must have good leaders. Let us participate in our mass meetings, in our party organization meetings, in our conventions; then when we go to the polls, we may have somebody worthy of our vote on our tickets.

May the Lord bless us to uphold and sustain the great Constitution of this nation and to maintain ourselves pure and unspotted from the sins of the world in all of our undertakings, and call down the blessings of our Heavenly Father upon us and upon our neighbors.

This should be a challenge to us as members in the Church of Jesus Christ and to all our friends and our neighbors and all people throughout the earth who stand in favor of good government, for righteousness in government; who have and foster the same ideals that are so close to our hearts. I hope and pray that the Lord will thus bless us all that we may fully accomplish the purposes of our creation, and be grateful to him day by day for the blessings he bestows upon us, and this I ask humbly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I truly am very grateful for the blessings of the Lord; the blessings that have come to me personally. I am grateful for the blessings which have come to this people as a group, individually as well as collectively. I am grateful for the privilege of living in this age, which is a choice age—a choice dispensation.

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It seems it is an inherent desire for all of the faithful children of God to receive a blessing from him. It has been so since the very beginning. Adam called upon God and received blessings; and then in his turn he called all of his righteous descendants together at Adam-ondi-Ahman and blessed them; and they, in turn, blessed him.

Noah, in his turn, received the blessings of the Lord, and then after the waters of the flood had receded and he came forth from the ark, he blessed his children.

Abraham, in his turn, received blessings from the Lord and blessed others. We today are receiving the benefits of the great blessings which were given to Abraham in fulfilment of the promises given to him.

As Abraham was departing with Lot, the Lord said to him:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Gen. 12:3.)

And today we are realizing the fulfilment of that promise, for all the families of the earth are receiving the blessings of the Lord, through Abraham, more than they have ever done before.

Isaac, in his turn, also pronounced the blessings of the Lord upon his descendants. There is the very interesting story of the blessing of Jacob and Esau. When Isaac was old, he felt the need to give his sons blessings. He called Esau, telling him to go out and kill and prepare venison for him. He said ". . . make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die." (*Ibid.*, 27:4.) And Rebekah, mother of Esau and Jacob, heard him and knowing that Jacob was divinely called to receive the birthright blessings, called Jacob and sent him to fetch two kids, saying that she would prepare savory meat for her husband such as he loved, for she knew how to prepare it. And thus Rebekah assisted Jacob to receive the blessings of birthright.

Jacob blessed his twelve sons and

gave them each a blessing suited to their individual rewards and pronounced promises that should come to them. Joseph received a special blessing which we are most interested in because we are his descendants, the most part of us, and the blessings of the gospel have come through this line, for Joseph Smith, Senior, was a true descendant, through Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph.

You know the story of how Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, how he crossed his hands and gave them each a blessing and gave unto them promises. The history of blessings is meager from then until now. In the Book of Mormon we are given the information, definitely, which declares that a descendant of Joseph should be raised up in these the last days. (See II Nephi 3:14-15.) It has been made known that Joseph Smith, Senior, was that descendant, and he received the blessings of Ephraim.

Then in this day and age, and I think if our records were more complete, we would probably find something similar with those of ancient times, the Lord tells us in the Doctrine and Covenants that

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. (D. & C. 107:39.)

Thus today we have more than one patriarch; we have one or more in each of the stakes of the Church; and they are represented in the group here on my right. We always have a section here reserved for the stake patriarchs. They are outstanding, faithful members of the Church, who have been given the responsibility of blessing the people in their stakes, blessing those who desire blessings. And just as it was in ancient times—today, too, the Lord's people desire his blessings. And as a Church we have the priesthood and the authority through which these blessings may be given. These blessings given today are more formal than those given in ancient times, that is, judging

from the meager records which we have. A patriarchal blessing today, given by an ordained patriarch, should contain a declaration of lineage, that is, the tribe of Israel through which the promises of inheritance shall come, even as assignments of inheritances were given in ancient Israel.

Now we know that some of the inhabitants of the earth are not descendants of Israel. We know that some of the inhabitants of the earth who join the Church are not direct descendants of Israel. It is given to us that the descendants of Shem and Japheth, sons of Noah, if they receive the gospel, are entitled to the priesthood. Only the sons of Cain are not entitled to the priesthood, and you can read why in the Pearl of Great Price. So all the descendants of Shem and Japheth, as they accept of the gospel of Jesus Christ, are entitled to the blessings of Israel, because that was the promise given to Abraham, that through him all the families of the earth should be blessed.

And so, as these patriarchal blessings are given, there is given a declaration of lineage, or an assignment; for a pure Gentile who joins the Church becomes by adoption of the seed of Abraham and of Israel. (Gen. 12:3; Abr. 2:11.)

We have people on the earth who we know are not descendants of Israel, yet in the acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ they are entitled to the blessings of Israel, and through the power of inspiration the patriarch will assign them to Israel.

It is required that patriarchal blessings be recorded in the Church records. The body of the blessing usually contains sacred promises for comfort or for counsel or warning, according to certain possibilities of blessings. All is predicated upon obedience to divine laws and faithfulness. The closing of a blessing is the sacred sealing of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood. The blessing pronounced, with all it contains, should serve as a comfort and guide through life according to faithfulness and is sealed forever upon the conditions of faithfulness to the laws

of God, which includes the laws of nature. Patriarchal blessings have been a source of guidance and comfort to tens of thousands of members of the Church. Their faith has been quickened and strengthened through them.

An example of what a patriarchal blessing can do came to me in a story which I have repeated many times, which a woman told me. As a young woman she lived in a small town. When she finished high school, there was no further opportunity to continue her education; there was no further opportunity to get work so that she could be independent; so she came to Salt Lake City where she found herself a job. As time came for registration at the university, she became very anxious to go to school again, and knowing that there was not a possibility, under present conditions, she felt quite disheartened. She went to the patriarch and received her patriarchal blessing, and in the blessing he promised her that she should receive a good education. She was elated, and she went out of the office feeling very happy. Before she had gone half a block, she said, she fell to earth out of her cloud with a realization that going to college cost money, and she did not have any, nor the means to get it. The opportunity and possibility of going to college at present did not seem to be at all possible, which made her very downhearted again. And the thought came to her to go visit her aunt, who was living in Salt Lake City. Without stopping to analyze that impression she turned, and instead of going back to work, she went to visit her aunt and told her aunt of her experience, cried on her shoulder, and her aunt said to her, "I know an elderly woman who lives down the street a few blocks. She has at various times helped young girls get through college in return for the help the girls can give to her. I do not know whether she has help now or not, but," she said, "this woman knows who I am. Go down and see her and tell her I sent you."

She went on the run to this elderly

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woman's home, and within two weeks from the time she received her patriarchal blessing, she registered at the University of Utah, signed a promissory note to pay for her education, and eventually paid for it. She said if she had stopped to question the first impression she got to go visit her aunt, she would have said to herself, "Why should I go visit my aunt and tell her my troubles? I came to Salt Lake City to be independent; why not be independent? She cannot help me with my troubles; she has enough of her own. She doesn't have space in her home to let me sleep there, let alone board me, nor help me. Why need I go and bother my aunt?" But she did not stop to analyze that impression; she acted on it. As a result she met the woman who gave her the opportunity of receiving her education.

Similarly, many experiences have come to people in making decisions. I have had many experiences myself of giving patriarchal blessings, and then afterwards the individual would comment to the effect that he had now made up his mind and knew what course to follow. Often I ask whether individuals have any particular problem or worry. Just recently, a young woman said, "Well, Tom is coming home in a few months, and I am going to wait for him, and then we will get married in the temple." She said another young man had been wanting her to marry him, but she said, "That would not be a marriage in the temple; I am going to wait for Tom." Many times these experiences come to patriarchs.

Many men and women have been given courage to carry on, in battle and at home, in positions of responsibility in Church work, and even the will to live in times of sickness through which they have been raised from the grip of death by means of administration through the priesthood. It is the right and privilege of every baptized member of the Church to receive a patriarchal blessing. In the past many received more than one blessing. This practice

has been discontinued. After a person has received a patriarchal blessing through an ordained patriarch, in which his lineage is declared, he is in possession of his patriarchal blessing, and to repeat the lineage is superfluous. We are asked, what about additional blessings? These additional blessings need not be given by an ordained patriarch. Through the patriarchal order of the priesthood it is the right and duty of a father to minister unto his own individual family. That is, the father in the home has a perfect right or duty to bless his children. That is, if the father holds the priesthood which authorizes him to do so, he may bless his own children, and also baptize them, and confirm them, with full consent and appointment from the duly authorized officers in charge.

I was at a fast and testimony meeting one day, and the bishop received a baby in his arms, from a woman in the congregation, and as he did so, he looked around the room. Finally he said hesitatingly, "This is the child of Brother and Sister Brown." After pausing a minute he said, "Brother Jones will bless the child." A man who was standing in the group of officiators spoke up and said, "No, Bishop, that is my child, I will bless him." And so the bishop recognized the father. He had been looking around the audience to find the father and not seeing him was under necessity to appoint someone else. But the father spoke up and said, "I will bless the child," and he did. That was correct.

Bishops should not only invite a father to administer to his own family but should also seek permission before substituting for the father. Naturally, if a child is going to a meeting, say for instance, a young man is going to a meeting where he is to be ordained a deacon, and the family knows that he is to be ordained a deacon, the bishop should invite the father, if he is a faithful man, to ordain his son. The bishop is the father of the ward. It is his duty to be the father of those families who do not have fathers in their own

homes or where fathers do not exercise their priesthood; and it is the right of the bishop to ordain or to appoint someone to ordain boys in these families. It is a courtesy for the bishop to invite a father to ordain his own son.

An ordained stake patriarch has the privilege, by the same token, of blessing his own family, wherever they are. He is also the father or patriarch for the other families in his stake who do not have a father who is an ordained patriarch. A stake patriarch, then, is a stake officer, and he does not have authority to officiate outside of his stake, only as he may give blessings to his immediate family. Those who need or desire additional blessings may receive a blessing from any elder in the Church but not to be recorded.

I have an example in my mind, and there are many families in the Church that do likewise, where the father blesses the children when they are named; he baptizes them when they are of age; he confirms them and ordains them to the various offices of the priesthood as they grow in position to be so ordained, but always with the consent and approval of the bishop. When children start out to a higher school of learning, when they leave home to go on a mission, when they leave home to go into the service, and at the time of their marriage, a father may bless his children and place the blessings in his family record, rightly, for the benefit of the family, and the family reflects the spirit of those blessings.

Now, may the blessings of the Lord be with all of us and help us to magnify our callings in the priesthood. The Lord has told us in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 84, verse 33,

For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the *magnifying their calling*, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.

And if you will continue reading in section eighty-four, the next few verses,

you will get more instructions regarding that priesthood.

Brethren, magnify the callings of your priesthood, and the strength of the Lord will be with us all, which I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.

Tonight, in this building, there will be held a meeting at which special instruction will be given regarding new plans for missionary work. Presidencies of missions, the Missionary Committee, General Authorities, stake authorities, ward authorities, are all invited. And undoubtedly there will be room for the public. The sisters are invited as well. I did not imply by that that the sisters are not part of the public, the better part.

For the benefit of those who have been listening in, I should like to say that the members of the congregation here in the Tabernacle, have been looking all day at some very magnificent bouquets of lilies, calla lilies. They stretch from the left of the top pulpit to the right an equal distance, and bouquets of three each are extending from the top pulpit down to the first seat in the audience. Silent messengers of love. These flowers are particularly associated with one of the two greatest events in the history of the world—the resurrection of our Lord.

You will be pleased to know that these lovely flowers have been raised and furnished to us by the High Priests of the Berkeley Stake of California. In your behalf we extend sincere thanks and appreciation for this contribution to our conference.

We are indebted, not for the silent message, but for the inspirational messages that we had from the members of the Combined Choruses of the Brigham Young University. I do not know how you have been impressed today, but just the presence of these young people in such large numbers has been an inspira-