

women who attend in all the essentials of intelligent industrial life.

The close connection of instruction and practical experiment, will give a zest to study that, it is claimed by promoters of industrial schools, can be obtained in no other way.

The training together of the head and hand has been regarded in our community as the ideal education. President Brigham Young always taught that it was the correct method, and made provision in the deeds of trust in which he endowed the institutions of learning bearing his name, that industrial departments should be maintained by them.

For the lack of means, but little progress has been made toward realizing this ideal. It will be of exceeding interest to the people of Utah to observe the progress of this institution, which is so generously equipped and supported by the national and territorial governments.

To the farmers, who, in their poverty and ignorance of the character of soil and conditions to insure success, have spent many years and much labor and means in costly experiments, that they could ill afford, the creation of this institution, as an experimental station, will be of great value. From its experiments, made at government expense, information of a

practical kind is to be disseminated, and the whole farming community made to share the benefits of their results. Success to the Agricultural College.

The beautiful steel engraving in this number was executed by Messrs. Hall's Sons, from a portrait of President Cannon taken several years ago. At the time, it was regarded as an excellent likeness, and the engraving when it was new was superb. For our use, the Messrs. Hall have thoroughly retouched the steel plate, and we are therefore able to present impressions that are equal to the first that were printed from it.

President Cannon's contribution to the magazine, for reasons fully explained, came so late that we were unable to assign it the place of honor, at the beginning of the number. Its great interest to our readers is not, however, diminished thereby. It will be perused with absorbing interest and profit, and is a paper with which we are delighted to close the Eleventh Volume of THE CONTRIBUTOR.

Let us do the work before us,
Cheerily, bravely, while we may,
Ere the long night-silence cometh,
And with us is not the day.

J. G. Whittier.

OUR PRE-EXISTENCE AND PRESENT PROBATION.

My Dear Mr. Editor:

I feel ashamed at not having been able to fulfill my promise to you before this in preparing an article for your valuable magazine. My only excuse is, want of time. Public duties have pressed upon me to such an extent that I have found it difficult to keep my promise. In the absence of something better, there are some remarks that I made recently at a meeting at Smithfield, at which there were quite a number of young men and young women, which I have thought might not be unprofitable for your readers. I place them at your service. If you think them worthy of publication, you are welcome to them. Understanding my position as

you do, I know you will forgive me for not doing better.

I am, your Brother,

Geo. Q. Cannon.

BRETHREN AND SISTERS: I hope that you are united, and that you are dwelling together in love, and that there is no backbiting, nor any jealousies, nor envyings, nor strife in your midst. The principles that our Father in Heaven has revealed to us, if practised by us, will make us a model people. We shall have a foretaste on the earth of that heaven which is promised to us. It is for this purpose that the Gospel has been revealed. It is to prepare men and women for the life to come, by teaching them

those principles of godliness and purity which will result, through their obedience, in their being admitted into the society and presence of God and the Lamb. Our Savior has taught this principle with great plainness to us. He has revealed unto us the object for which we came here. I often think of the great advantage we have in this respect over every other people. You young men and young women, if you were to start out from Smithfield and go east or west, and inquire of all the people you met, of whom you could inquire conveniently, as to their ideas concerning the object of existence here on earth, you would be surprised at the amount of ignorance that you would find, even among people otherwise intelligent. You may converse with the most learned men—men who profess to know everything that theology teaches—and ask them the object of man's existence on the earth, and why he is placed here, and I doubt if you could get a satisfactory answer from any of them. The reason is that they do not know themselves. Life is a mystery to them. They know they are here. They know that they will live here for awhile. But the object of their being placed here, and what their future will be, is very vague to them. Many people who believe in religion will tell you that there are two places after this life—one is heaven and the other is hell; and that the good go to heaven, and the wicked go to hell. But how long they will remain in hell, or what they will do in heaven, they can tell you very little about. Some think that the time of beings who reach heaven is spent chiefly in singing and in playing harps, and in exercises of this character. But if you ask them, how shall we live when we get there?—shall the relationship that exists now between husbands and wives, between parents and children, be continued? in the most of instances the reply would be, No; all shall love all, and every woman will be as dear to every man as his wife, and every child as dear to every parent as their own children.

How different is the position that we occupy, brethren and sisters. God, in

His infinite mercy, has revealed to us a great truth. It is a truth that, when understood by us, gives a new light to our existence, and inspires us with the most exalted hopes. That truth is that God is our Father, and we are His children. What a tender relationship! What a feeling of nearness it creates within us! What? God my Father? Am I indeed His son? Am I indeed His daughter? Do I belong to the family of God? Is this literally true? The answer is, Yes. God has revealed it, that we are literally His children, His offspring; that we are just as much His children as our offspring are our children; that He begot us; and that we existed with Him in the family relationship as His children. What an immensity of vision is given to us in this truth! What a field for reflection! And how our hearts should be inspired with great hopes and anticipations, to think that the Being under whose direction this earth was organized, who governs the planets and controls the universe, who causes the rotation of the seasons and makes this earth so beautiful and such a delightful place of habitation, is our Father, and that we are His children, descended from Him! What illimitable hopes the knowledge of this inspires us with!

Now, this is the truth. We humble people; we who feel ourselves sometimes so worthless, so good-for-nothing; we are not so worthless as we think. There is not one of us but what God's love has been expended upon. There is not one of us that He has not cared for and caressed. There is not one of us that He has not desired to save, and that He has not devised means to save. There is not one of us that He has not given His angels charge concerning. We may be insignificant and contemptible in our own eyes, and in the eyes of others, but the truth remains that we are the children of God, and that He has actually given His angels—invisible beings of power and might—charge concerning us, and they watch over us and have us in their keeping. Jesus has said, referring to His disciples:

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That

in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”

Those who otherwise might be thought to be contemptible and unworthy of notice, Jesus says, be careful about offending them, for “their angels do always behold the face of my Father.” We are in their charge. They watch over us, and are, to a certain extent, doubtless, responsible for the watchcare that they exercise over us, just as we are responsible for any duty that is assigned us.

This is one great truth that has been revealed to us. And with this truth is this kindred truth: that we dwelt in the presence of our Father; that we are the brothers and sisters of that great and exalted Being who helped create the heavens and the earth, namely, Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer; and that as He dwelt in the presence of the Father, and afterwards descended and took upon Himself the form of man, being born as a babe, so we have done. It is no more wonderful for us to be born in this manner—as babes—than it was for Him to be born a babe—the babe of Bethlehem. It is just as reasonable to suppose that the whole family of man had a pre-existence as it is to suppose that Jesus, and He alone, had a pre-existence.

Having obtained this knowledge, the next question is, Why are we here? Why did God send us here? And what was His object in concealing the knowledge of our former state from us? Why is it, if we were in this glorious relationship to our Eternal Father, and we dwelt with Him, that the knowledge of it has faded from our memories? Well, there are reasons for this, and they are plain and simple and easily understood when they are explained to us. It is necessary for exaltation that human beings should gain experience. We are the children of God, and as His children He desires to make us like Himself, to attain to the same glory and enter upon the same career of progress and exaltation that He has entered upon. Therefore, it is necessary, in His wisdom and according to the laws of exaltation, that we should descend from our heavenly abode and come here and take

upon us mortal tabernacles, and forget all that we knew. The reason of this is that we should be tempted, that we should be tried, that we should be purified, that the dross of our nature should be cleansed by obedience to the laws of God, and that by obedience to His laws these tabernacles which we have received, and which belong to this fallen world, may be redeemed, and be fitted and prepared to dwell in a higher and purer abode—in an element that is far beyond anything that we know anything of at the present time. These tabernacles of ours, which are so full of humanity and its weaknesses, God has given unto us, and He has told us how we can redeem them—by obeying the laws He has taught.

But some will say: “Why, if God is all-powerful, does He not restrain the devil, and why does He allow him to afflict the children of men?” The reason is found in the fact that these things are necessary. It is necessary that we should be tempted, that we should be tried, that we should be purified, by going through these trials and passing through this furnace of affliction which this life furnishes. Now, there are some of you, probably, that have had disagreeable missions to perform in your life. Some of you perhaps have had afflictions. I think there are some here who have been in the penitentiary for carrying out a principle of our religion. You have passed through many severe ordeals. Let me ask you—you men of experience, and you women of experience—is it not a fact that those scenes which were the most trying to you and the hardest to bear at the time have been the most profitable to you? Do you not look back to them and feel that they have been the most fruitful in experience to you, and the most beneficial also in the lessons that they have taught you? I know this is my experience. I look back to the disagreeable parts of my life, that is, the parts that were thought to be disagreeable at the time, and I say to myself, I thank God that I had these things to contend with. I thank God for the difficult missions that I have taken. I thank God for the poverty that we had to con-

tend with in our journeyings, and in our persecutions, and in our coming to Salt Lake Valley and making our settlements. I thank God that I was among those who came at that time and passed through those scenes. Why? Because, in looking back at those scenes, I am convinced that they have been most profitable to me. The experience was unpleasant at the time. I would have shunned it if I could have had my own way, because human nature shrinks from trials and afflictions. Human nature desires an easy path to tread. It wants to go with the stream, to float with the current. We therefore avoid the hardships of life if we can. But after we have passed through these trying scenes and endured these afflictions, we look back at them and are thankful, and say they have been more fruitful in profitable experience to us than any other scenes that we have passed through. This is not only the case in relation to parts of our lives; it is the case in relation to the whole of our lives. When we have passed through this probation, if we have been faithful, we shall look back at all that we have experienced and thank God, with all our hearts, that He permitted us to come on the earth and have the opportunities that we had of showing our fidelity to God, our willingness to keep His commandments, and our determination that we would not be seduced from the path of obedience and rectitude by the blandishments and the temptations of Satan.

It is necessary, I say, to exaltation that we should pass through these scenes. Some there are who will fail; but the failure will not produce everlasting damnation. There will be, as the Lord says, few who will walk in the straight and narrow path that leadeth unto lives eternal. But there will be many that will get glory—all that they live for. There will be different degrees of glory, and men will receive that degree which they live for. But there are some, of whom Abraham has written, who are noble ones. The Lord showed unto Abraham "the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and

great ones; * * * and he said, These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me, Abraham, thou art one of them, thou wast chosen before thou wast born." And I am happy to say that of that number the Latter-day Saints are counted, speaking generally, because they show their valor, they show their integrity and their love, and are willing to obey God whatever the consequences may be; and they are determined to be true and faithful though death should stare them in the face. These are the ones whom God will choose to be His rulers. And there is this promise given unto us, that after we have finished this probation and are faithful to God, then—lay it as a comfort to your hearts, and let it fill you with joy—Satan will have no more power over us. If you are faithful to the truth, if you keep the commandments of God all your days, when the time comes for you to pass away from this state of existence, Satan's power will have ended. After that he can exercise no dominion over you. You are emancipated from his thralldom. You will then be ushered into the presence of the holy and the just. You will dwell in the paradise of God, waiting with delightful anticipations the time when your spirits and your bodies will be re-united, and when you shall dwell together with the holy, the just and exalted ones in the presence of God and the Lamb, nevermore, as the prophets have said, to depart or to go out thence.

But those who are unfaithful, those who will listen to Satan, who will lend a willing ear to his blandishments and to his allurements, when they go from this state of existence, they go into a condition where they are subject to his power. They will dwell in darkness; and according to their sins their punishment will be. Some will be consigned to "outer darkness," where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; and they will remain in that condition until they will be visited by some servant of God to unlock the prison doors to them, and to preach to them again the Gospel of salvation, through repentance and faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ. The condition of these spirits will be similar to that described by Alma. You remember when he was stricken down to the earth, in company with the sons of Mosiah. He was visited by an angel of God. His astonishment was so great that he became dumb, and they carried him home. His father and his brethren prayed over him and for him. After they had fasted and prayed two days and two nights, Alma was restored. He then described the agony of mind and the torment that he had endured. He was in hell during that period. His "soul was racked with eternal torment." While he was in this condition he remembered that his father had taught about one Jesus, who should come as a Savior; and when that thought came across his mind he clung to it, and he besought Jesus to come to his deliverance, and deliverance came. So it will be with those who are damned in the way that I have described, and who are consigned to torment. They will remain in that condition, according to the enormity of their offenses, until punishment will be meted out to them sufficiently to bring them to a condition that they will receive the Gospel of salvation. That Gospel which is taught to us will be taught to them, and they will have an opportunity of obeying it in their damned condition, and through repentance they will receive salvation.

Now, how much better it is for us, while this day of probation lasts, and while God gives us life, and power, and opportunities, to live according to the laws of God, so that every day our sins will be remitted. Let us confess our sins to our Father every day, and if we have sinned against our brethren and sisters, obtain forgiveness of them. Then when the hour of death approaches, no matter where it may find us, we shall be found prepared to enter into the presence of our God. How much better, I say, it is to be in this condition than to lead a life of sin, and then go into torment and remain there till we embrace the opportunities that we now reject.

My young friends, God has give unto us opportunities of happiness—happiness that is as exquisite as anything can be.

Who can describe the happiness that attends the presence of the Spirit of God when it descends upon us? This happiness is placed within the reach of young and old, and God has given us opportunities of obtaining it, until our souls are filled to overflowing with the love of God and with a peace that passeth understanding, excepting on the part of those who enjoy it. How much better, I repeat again, is it for us to seize these opportunities, and live this life of purity, and show unto our Father that though we have been shut out from His presence, and a veil of darkness drawn between us and Him, so that we cannot recall the scenes of the past, we know by His Holy Spirit that the things which He has taught us concerning the past are true, and that notwithstanding we are placed in this condition of darkness we will be true to Him, we will maintain our integrity, we will be faithful under all circumstances, and will not listen to the persuasions of that arch enemy of His, even Satan, who seeks our destruction and the destruction of everything that is good and virtuous, pure and holy. If we thus live, when we pass away and go into the paradise of God, we shall wait there, as I have said, with delightful anticipation the time when the resurrection shall come, when our bodies and our spirits shall be reunited. Then we shall receive a fulness of glory. Then we shall be crowned. Then, if we have been promised thrones, and have lived so as to be worthy of them, we shall have kingdoms assigned us; we shall have dominion assigned us; we shall have glory, immortality and eternal lives, which have been sealed upon us by the servants of God, verified unto us, and we shall enjoy these great glories that He has said we shall receive.

Do any of you doubt the truth of these things? Let me ask you: Did you receive the remission of your sins when you were baptized by the servant of God? I suppose every man and woman in this congregation will say, "Yes; when I was baptized for the remission of my sins, I received the remission of my sins; when I had hands laid upon me by the servant of God for the gift of the Holy Ghost, I

received the gift of the Holy Ghost; I know that God confirmed the words of His servant when he administered this ordinance unto me." Yes, I know it. And that same Priesthood that said unto you that you should receive the remission of your sins, and that said unto you that you should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, has sealed upon your heads—many of you, at least—the promise that you shall come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, clothed with glory, immortality and eternal lives, and that you shall have kingdoms, and thrones, and principalities, and powers, and dominion, with the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, on condition of your faithfulness; and just as true as that you have received the remission of your sins, and that you have received the gift of the Holy Ghost, through the administration and words of the servants of God, so true will it be that you will receive the fulfillment of these other promises. You will come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, if you will comply with the conditions, clothed with glory, immortality and eternal lives. You will receive thrones, and principalities, and powers, and dominions, and exaltations. You will receive the blessings of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Not one word that the Lord has spoken through His servants will fail, unless you yourselves take a course to cause a failure. And then what? Why, human imagination fails. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." In our present condition we cannot conceive of these things, because they are beyond our comprehension. But we have a foretaste of that glory given unto us in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit when it rests upon us. You have felt, no doubt, many times in your lives as though you were filled to overflowing and had no room for another drop of happiness. The peace and love of God have filled your hearts. Of course, we are but mortal beings at the present time, and we are not prepared for that glory and immortality that God has in store for us. But we will grow up to it,

and we will be prepared for it when it comes.

My brethren and sisters, this is the knowledge that has been revealed to us, and we are peculiarly blessed in having this knowledge. We are not left to uncertainty and to imagination; or to say, "Well, perhaps this is so," or "this is a very nice theory that this man advances about our pre-existence and our present probation." We are not in that condition. God has removed doubt from our hearts and our minds concerning these things. We know them. The testimony of God is with us. He bears testimony to us that we are His children. And he wants to draw us to Him, in His arms of love. He wants to save us and exalt us, and make us like Himself; clothe us with glory, and make us indeed gods in the eternal world, wielding dominion and power. For this purpose He has sent us here. For this purpose He has given us His laws, which we understand to some extent. Let us practice them, my young friends. I see a great many boys and girls here to-night. Let me say to you, before I close: If you doubt these things, seek unto God yourselves in secret prayer; and I promise you, if you will do this, that God will reveal these things to you. He will fill your heart with the testimony of His Spirit concerning the divinity of this work; and He will make you mighty instruments in your day and generation in helping build it up. This is the path of peace, the path of joy, the path of exaltation, for every human being to tread. Therefore, be advised in the days of your youth, while you are full of life and activity. Make God your friend; then He will be your friend throughout the remainder of your life; and when you grow old, and the meridian of life is past, and the sunset is drawing near, you will look back with pleasure and delight upon your lives; you will feel that you have chosen the right path, and you will thank God for having given you strength and grace to do so. This is the course for all of us, young and old, to take. That God may bless us, and save us, and exalt us, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.