

MAN LIVED BEFORE HIS LIFE

Discourse Delivered by
ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.At the Pioneer Stake Conference, in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Sunday,
April 26, 1908.

(Reported by F. W. Otterstrom.)

I HAVE been an interested listener to the remarks made by Elder Tanner this afternoon, and also to the many good things that were spoken at the morning meeting of the conference. If I may have the spirit of the Lord, I will voice a few of the thoughts and reflections that have passed through my mind while my brethren have been speaking.

AS TO OPINIONS.

In the first place, let me say that I am a firm believer in the doctrine, if it may be called a doctrine, that the place to apply for information upon any subject is where the information is lodged; and I am not a believer in the fallacy that one man's opinion is as good as another's. Before we can predict such a thing with any show of truth or reason, we must first be sure that the men are standing on the same plane. The men must be equal before their opinions can be equal. True, it is sometimes put in this way: Outside of what God has revealed, one man's opinion is as good as another's. But even then, it is not a sound proposition. Even where revelation is silent upon a subject, it is a standard reason that those who have studied that subject are more capable of expressing a correct opinion upon it than those who have given it no thought at all.

If I wanted to learn something of the truths of astronomy, I would go to an astronomer for my information; if I wanted to know something of architecture, I would consult an architect; if I wished advice or opinion regarding financial matters, I would confer with a financier. And so, if I desired knowledge respecting God and religion and eternal life, I would seek it from a prophet or some other inspired man. If I could find one, one man's advice or opinion is as good as another's, only when the men are equal in intelligence, in comprehension, in capacity, in the power to grasp truth—equal in opportunities to form correct conclusions regarding the matters involved.

RESPECTING KNOWLEDGE.

I am not here today, neither are my brethren, to present to the people any mere opinion. We are here to teach the things that we know; to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, as taught by His prophets and apostles taught it anciently, and as His modern prophets and apostles have taught and are now teaching it. It is not our opinion, our supposition, our conjecture; it is God's eternal truth that He has spoken from the heavens. All we claim for the gospel, which the world calls "Mormonism," is that it is the old truth come back again.

THE THREEFOLD LIFE.

The beautiful hymn that has just been sung embodies the belief of the Latter-day Saints regarding the eternal past, the temporary present, and the never-ending future of man. We believe in the pre-existence—not merely the pre-existence of the Son of God, but the pre-existence of all men, and by the prophets and the apostles. What we claim for it, is simply a new presentation. All down the ages, good men and women have believed in the immortality of the soul, and have believed that we lived before we came into this life, and that we shall live after this life ends.

WORDSWORTH AND PRE-EXISTENCE.

They were not always prophets and apostles who so believed. I have in mind an English poet who advanced the idea of the pre-existence of Wordsworth, in his sublime ode, "Immortality."

WOMAN'S BACKACHE



The back is the mainspring of woman's organism. It quickly calls attention to trouble by aching. It tells, with other symptoms, such as nervousness, headache, pains in the loins, weight in the lower part of the body, that a woman's feminine organism needs immediate attention.

In such cases the one sure remedy which speedily removes the cause, and restores the feminine organism to a healthy, normal condition is

LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND

Mrs. Will Young, of 6 Columbia Ave., Rockland, Me., says:

"I was troubled for a long time with dreadful backaches and a pain in my side, and was miserable in every way. I doctored until I was discouraged and thought I would never get well. I read that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound had done for others and decided to try it; after taking three bottles I can truly say that I never felt so well in my life."

Mrs. Augustus Lyon, of East Earl, Pa., writes to Mrs. Pinkham:

"I had very severe backaches, and pressing-down pains. I could not sleep, and had no appetite. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound cured me and made me feel like a new woman."

FACTS FOR SICK WOMEN.

For thirty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from roots and herbs has been the standard remedy for female ills, and has positively cured thousands of women who have been troubled with displacements, inflammation, ulceration, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, that bearing-down feeling, flatulency, indigestion, dizziness, or nervous prostration.

tions of Immortality," puts forth the thought in these words:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.
Not in entire forgetfulness,
Nor yet in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

But Wordsworth thought he had to apologize for this beautiful and sublime sentiment. It awoke the suspicion of certain good and honest people, who accused him of endeavoring to inculcate a belief in the pre-existence of man—a doctrine, he says, upon which revelation is silent, although there is nothing against it in sacred writ. I have always felt sorry that the great poet deemed it necessary to bow before the bigotry of his time and apologize for the utterance of so noble a thought.

NO APOLOGY FROM MORMONISM.

Mormonism has no such apology to make. It proclaims the pre-existence of man as a doctrine, and it goes beyond what Wordsworth declares. He says that such a doctrine is not inculcated in sacred writ—that revelation is silent upon the subject; but excites himself upon the ground that there is nothing against it in the Bible. Mormonism declares that the Bible teaches it as clearly as it teaches the immortality of the soul.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS.

When Jesus was about to depart from the earth, He prayed to the Father in these words: "I have with thee before the world was," and John, the apostle, afterwards said: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." This ought to be enough to establish the truth of the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence.

"Oh, say, Christian, don't question that; but we hold that the Scriptures are silent upon the subject of the pre-existence of the human soul. Very well, then, we will consider that phase of the subject. Let us see if the Scriptures are silent upon that point. Let us take the Bible just as it reads. We will begin with the first chapter of Genesis, where Moses, the prophet of God, 1,500 years before the coming of the Savior, begins to teach what the God of Heaven has taught him regarding the creation of the earth, the creation of man, and the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, and all other things that God had made. In the first chapter of Genesis an account is given of the work of God. He made two great lights, the one to rule the day and the other to govern the night; how He separated the sea from the dry ground, and made the waters teem with their finny tribes; how He made all other things, until he came to man. Then He says: 'Let us make man in our own image.' 'So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.' God gives to man all the other creations, and then He ends.

But note the contents of the second chapter. After all these creations have been called forth, we are met by the astonishing statement that 'there was not man' in the earth, and the key is furnished in the same chapter, where it says: 'These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.'

THE SPIRITUAL CREATION.

What could be plainer than that there was a creation before the one in which man received his mortal body. We are indebted, however, to the revelation for the fullness of the explanation concerning these things. Joseph Smith revised the Hebrew Bible after he had translated the Book of Mormon. In the Hebrew record, he had found utterances to the effect that the Bible, which millions of Christians deem all-sufficient for salvation, is imperfect, in that many plain and precious parts, many valuable truths, have been taken from it, in its passage down the centuries through the hands of uninspired men. Guided by the spirit of revelation, the prophet revised the Scriptures and restored the parts that render plain and comprehensible matters otherwise involved in mystery. One of them is the creation of man in the spirit before he was created in the flesh; and not only this, but the creation of all things in the spirit before they were naturally upon the face of the earth.

WHAT CHEMISTRY SHOWED.

I remember hearing of a chemist who took a grain of wheat and separated it into its component parts, and discovered that there was so much lime in that grain of wheat, so much silica, so much of this element, and that element and having made himself thoroughly acquainted with it, as he supposed, he went to work to make a grain of wheat exactly like it; and he thought he had succeeded. He took the same proportion of the same elements, and brought them together by his knowledge and skill as a chemist, as a man of science. He made a grain of wheat so precisely similar to the other, that the natural eye could not detect the difference. Then he planted the two grains; and the one that God made sprang up, and the one that man made stayed down. Why was it? Man cannot create the spirit—even of a grain of wheat. He cannot destroy the spirit, because he never had the power to create it. He can destroy anything that he can create, but what he never created, he cannot destroy. Hence, the Savior said: 'Fear not those who can only destroy the body, but fear Him who can cast both soul and body into hell.' Man makes the body, as the agent of God, who is the architect of the mortal tabernacle; but God made the spirit of man and the spirit of every living thing, and it became a living soul when the spirit and the body were united. There is a separation of the body and the spirit at death, but it is only temporary; there is a reunion of the spirit and the body, which together constitute the soul; and the resurrection from the grave is the redemption of the soul.

Moses taught that there was a spiritual creation followed by a temporal creation; but it is not so plain in the Hebrew Bible as it is in the writings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Mormonism declares that the pre-existence of man and for his after existence, and for the infinite value of the present life, as related to the eternal past and the eternal future. We are reaping the harvest now that we sowed before we came here and we are now sowing a harvest that we shall reap in eternity. That is what Elder Tanner meant when he reminded us that every man will be rewarded according to his works. The things of the former life and of the future life are revealed to us, in part, by that spirit which 'searcheth all things, which brings things past to remembrance,' and 'shows things to come.'

EARTH NOT OUR HOME.

Earth is not our home; we came from



UNVEILING THE WHAANGA MONUMENT.

President Joseph F. Smith addressing New Zealand elders and friends assembled in the City Cemetery, Decoration Day, May 30, 1908, on the occasion of unveiling the monument erected in honor of the late Hirini Whaanga, the noted Maori chief. Among those present were many elders who had labored on the Pacific Islands.

God, and heaven is our home. But that is no reason why we should always be sighing to go home, when our duty is to remain here. We are at school upon the earth, and some are here upon missions in the midst of their fellow men.

The human race has been sent into the world to be taught, and to be developed by experience; but there are some great beings who have been sent to be teachers in this mortal school. The Son of God is the great Teacher of teachers, but He sends His servants, His prophets, His apostles, to instruct men in this life regarding those things that pertain to their eternal peace. Blessed are they who labor in bringing souls unto Christ, teaching those everlasting principles that are for the salvation and exaltation of man. Blessed are they whose hearts are in the work of God, who make it their meat and their drink and their joy, all the day long. Blessed are they who turn many unto righteousness, and who love the work of the salvation of souls.

THE NEPHITE TWELVE.

This great truth was impressed upon us this morning in the few remarks made by President McLaughlin, at the Stake House. He read from the Book of Mormon, in the 28th chapter of 2nd Nephi, where the Son of God is addressing His twelve disciples, chosen from among the Nephites. (For it is believed by the Latter-day Saints, that the Savior, after His resurrection at Jerusalem, came to the land, and was peopled by a remnant of the House of Israel, and appeared unto them, and chose twelve disciples, and taught them the same principles that He had taught to the twelve apostles at Jerusalem.) Brother McLaughlin showed that when the Savior was about to take His departure, He said to the Nephte twelve: 'What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?' And nine of them requested that when they had filled the measure of their years, the allotted age of man, they might speedily go to Him in His kingdom. But three of the twelve were downcast; they dared not utter the thought that was in their hearts, and He told them He could read their hearts, and knew what they desired. It was to remain upon the earth, to be John the Beloved, and labor for the salvation of souls down to the end of time. 'More blessed are ye,' the Savior said unto the twelve, 'and He gave to the desire of their hearts. Brother McLaughlin reminded us that the spirit of a true Latter-day Saint is not an inordinate desire to rest, which often means to run—not a desire to return prematurely to the heavenly home from which we come; but a desire to keep on laboring for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity.

LIFE MORE THAN DEATH.

It is more to live than to die. I recall some verses bearing upon this theme:

"So he died for his faith? That is fine.
More than most of us do.
But stay, can you add to that line,
That he lived for it, too?"

It is easy to die; men have died for a wish or a whim.
For heaven or passion, or pride.
Was it harder for him?
But to live—every day to live out

All the truth that he dreamt:
While his friends met his conduct with doubt,
And the world with contempt.

Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
Never turning aside?
Then we'll talk of the life that he led—
Never mind how he died."

I say it is greater to live than to die; it is greater to labor for God and to love the work of salvation, than to desire to return to Him and behold His face—at least, the time comes when we can obtain an honorable release from this mortal mission that He has placed upon us. But after we have



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done our work, after we have fulfilled our mission, and the Father says: 'Come home,' what a joy! What a satisfaction! And I want to say here, that this is the only anxiety I have over what men call death. When I have done my work, when I can feel confident that I have finished what I came to do, it matters not to me when my summons comes to go home to my Father and Mother in heaven.

I cannot imagine why there should be any prejudice against the sublime doctrine of the Motherhood as well as the Fatherhood of God; or against the great principle of the pre-existence. It is this knowledge that takes from death its sting, that robs the grave of its victory. I know not why there should be any prejudice against the comfort of this life. Is it not that we are pagans to some extent, that we set our hearts upon the pleasures and possessions of this world, and expect too much peace and happiness while here? The good and wise God who presides over the universe is all the time taking

WHY TRIALS ARE HEAVY.

What is it that bows the soul lowest when sorrow and trouble come? In the hour of blighted hopes and thwarted ambitions, what makes the world so dark? Is it not because we have been indulging ourselves, pampering ourselves in the belief that the earth is our home, our heaven, and that we came here only to enjoy the good things of this life? Is it not that we are pagans to some extent, that we set our hearts upon the pleasures and possessions of this world, and expect too much peace and happiness while here? The good and wise God who presides over the universe is all the time taking

GENEALOGY.

All communications for this department should be addressed to Mrs. Susa Young Gates, president, Daughters of Pioneers, 672 North First West Street, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Continuing the instructions to beginners in the prosecution of genealogical studies or labor:

As to how the first take out a membership in the Genealogical Society of Utah, instructions for "News" in this department. Then, for leave forever the office of the historian's office any week day after 9 o'clock. Entering at the front door, he will climb the narrow and awkward, but quaint and historic, stairway to the second floor, where the society, Elder Joseph F. Smith, Jr., has his office in the front, while the back rooms are occupied by the historians. The back rooms he will find the assistant librarians, and to her he may address his inquiries.

Speaking of those old stairs, how many memories of the pioneer past are called up by every footfall there. How many times the steps of the Church historian, President George A. Smith, whose home the house once was, have climbed that winding stair, to the room where Brigham Young, his life-long friend and associate, have pressed those worn steps; and Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, Orson Pratt, Erastus Snow, indeed all the apostles, who for heaven or passion, or pride, were the pillars of the Church of the Latter-day Saints. How many of the pioneer days of this Church and state, have all passed up and down those steep and clumsy stairs! How many councils of grave import have been held beneath that roof, for here was a prayer-room, in the old days. Ah, we sigh for fuller and freer quarters; but we would also mourn the loss of the historic house, which has stood the test of time for a century. These walls have housed the most important possessions of the apostles; the sacred archives of civil, social, and religious history; and as the sacred repository of them, this house should be a shrine to which mothers would bring their children, and point out the place where the men of God walked and worked.

Here, then, the embryo genealogist enters with reverent feet, and as he passes under the portals, he will surely whisper, "Peace be unto this house." And he will find peace—the peace that passeth all understanding—as a part of the very atmosphere of the whole place. On the lower floor are the offices of the Church historian, with his assistants and clerks. Here are housed Elder Andrew Jensen, A. Milton Musser, and that other historic and faithful worker, daughter of Apostle Orson Pratt and true woman and saint, Sister Marinda Pratt Weihe, who has worked here since she was a girl, with the rest of the clerical assistants. But the genealogist need not trouble these busy people, but should wend his way to the upper floor and there state his business to the librarian, who will courteously receive all comers.

There are a few general points which all should prepare themselves with before they go to the historian's office, or, indeed, anywhere else, to get genealogical information. These points are:

1. The full name of the individual whose genealogy is to be sought.
2. Where was he born, or whereabouts?
3. When or about when was he born?
4. When and where did he die, or whereabouts?
You would think that anyone would be sensible enough to prepare that simple information before starting out to hunt his genealogy, but you would be very much mistaken in such a supposition. For instance: A young lady of education and refinement seeks me today to ask my help in starting out with her genealogy. She tells me she knows nothing about her father, other than that his name was John F. Jones.

"Was he English or American?" I ask.

From us our idols, shattering the objects of our adoration, in order to remind us that the earth is not our permanent abiding place; that we came forth from Him, and must return to Him; that He must have our hearts, in order to make us eternally happy. He entreats us to reverse the proposition, and hold eternity to be more than time. When we do this, our disappointments, our sorrows, our tribulations, are minimized; the sting is taken from them, and we regard them merely as a means of discipline and development, opportunities given us for the exercise of faith, hope, charity, courage, and endurance.

EARTH WILL BE HEAVEN.

There is still another phase to this subject, and it is this: While the earth is not our home at the present time, it is destined to become our home, when it shall have passed through its baptism of fire, and is glorified and crowned with the presence of its Creator. The earth, it is written, "obeys the law of a celestial kingdom; wherefore it shall be sanctified and glorified, and beings of a celestial order shall inherit it. It will be theirs; it will be their heavenly home, and they shall return to it, and possess it forever and ever. The Son of God will be here; the prophets and apostles will be here; and He will partake of the Sacrament with them in His kingdom, when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus is the Christ, to the glory of God the Father.



After that, she may take up English surnames and the homes of the various families. And still further, her real work only begins when she sits down and begins with the first book on shelf No. 1 and goes straight through with that shelf, then the next, and then on and on until she has scanned every book in the library for Jones. We will continue this subject.

GENEALOGICAL WORKS.

English genealogical books which can be purchased through the Genealogical Society of Utah. Address, Joseph F. Smith, Jr., Secretary, care of Historian's office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Sackville, very rare, \$25; Sackville, of Kent, \$5; Sackville-West, Buckhurst peerage, \$1.75; Sankey, \$12.50; Savory, Savory, also, \$5; Savory, \$5.50; Sackville, \$1.50; Scott, very scarce; four different books regarding the families of Scott, \$7, \$12.50, \$4.50; Scranton, American, Conn., \$5; Scrope, \$5.50; Scrope, \$18; Selbyana, \$9; Shakspeare, six books, \$27; Shawe, including Stead and Stillington families, \$5.50; Sheffield, \$5.50; Sherborn, \$4.50; Sherwood, \$1.50; Shirley, \$6.50; Shirley, including Bassett, Brasse, Deveraux, Ferrers, Irton, Lovett, Staunton, Washington families, \$15.50; Shuttleham, \$2; Shuttle, \$1.75; Sidney, three books, \$25; Sigourney, \$4.50; Simson, \$4.50; three books, \$30; Skipwith, \$1; Smedley, \$7; Smith, nine books, of different lines, \$35; Smithson, \$5; Small, \$5; Smythe, \$2; Southron, \$1; Sparks, \$5; Stafford, \$1.50; Standish, \$4.50; Stanhope, \$5; Stanley, \$2; Sta-pleton, \$6.50; Starke, \$4.50; Stepeny, \$6.50; Steward, four books, of different lines, \$25; Still, \$4; Stonor, also pedigree of Goring, Mill, Forster, L. Strange, Pickering, Weston, Lewkenor and Theodor families, \$14.50; Stouton, \$8; Strachan, including Wise family, two books, \$14.50; Streeter, American, \$1; Stuart, two books, \$5; Swinton, \$1; Taaffe, \$8; Talbot, \$30; Tame, \$53; Tais, \$47; Tattersall, \$25; Tempest, \$11; Temple, \$4.50; Thackeray, \$1.75; Thel-lusson, \$3; Thornton, including Hayman, Marsch, Mantel and Le Pars families, \$14; Todd, including Solgwick Bull, Dodge, Herring, Roosevelt, Duike, Eddy, Platt, Foster and Kane families, \$5.

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