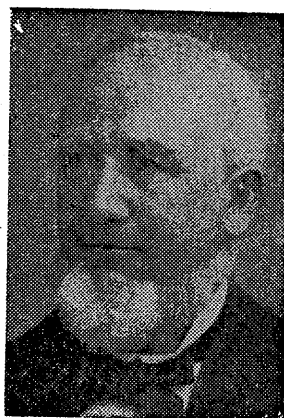


# Recollections of My Father

ROSANNAH CANNON IRVINE



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**I**N his journal of April 6th, 1884, Father records: "A beautiful morning for Conference . . . The meeting was opened by President Taylor . . . He stressed upon the people the necessity of observing order in our meetings . . ." Then Father was called on to speak. "I addressed the Conference on the divinity of the Book of Mormon, quoting from the prophecies contained in it to prove that it was inspired of God. The vast congregation listened with the utmost attention. This is perhaps the largest congregation we have ever had in the Tabernacle. In response to my remarks respecting their having a testimony by the power of the Holy Ghost, in fulfillment of the words of Moroni concerning the divinity of the Book of Mormon, the whole

audience responded aloud in the affirmative that they had this testimony. It was probably the most unanimously attested testimony ever borne at any single time before concerning the divinity of that precious record . . . President Joseph F. Smith spoke very spiritedly, proving from the Doctrine and Covenants the divinity of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. There were a number of prominent Indians on the stand who had been brought up from Arizona by President McDonald and his counselor Henry S. Richards."

Father was a devoted reader of the Church works; but of them all I believe his favorite was the Book of Mormon. He often said that when in trouble, doubt, or sorrow he opened that "precious record"

and found the consolation he needed. His constant plea was for members of our Church to study the scriptures. There was never a day that he did not read something from the Bible, Book of Mormon, or Doctrine and Covenants. (He usually spoke of the latter as the "Book of Covenants.") If he were too ill to read or the books were not available, with his remarkable memory he could recall the passages he wanted to review.

The most powerful sermon I ever remember having heard was delivered by my father to his family in the parlor of the Farmhouse, when he was on the "underground." It was on the three degrees of glory, given in a vision to the Prophet, and recorded in the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Reading the vision is enough to inspire anyone to deeds of righteousness; but to hear Father, with his simple, impressive eloquence deliver it was an inspiration to be remembered forever. I was a child then but the impression still remains with me. We did not know it at the time, but he told our mothers afterward of a great sorrow that had come to him that day.

On April 13th, 1884, the Sunday following the General Conference, Father was invited to speak in the Twelfth Ward. His subject had been assigned to him, "Fundamental Principles of the Gospel." (I can't imagine his getting very far away from that topic in a Sacrament meeting even if the request had not been made.) Some of the family

went with him and they reported at home that he gave a powerful sermon, that every seat was taken, and people were standing in every foot of space. President Taylor himself was there. The journal records: "I felt to thank my Heavenly Father for filling me with His Spirit to speak as I did and hold the undivided attention of all those people for two hours."

The next day, April 14th. he wrote, "A very sophisticated and dangerous article appeared in the Herald yesterday . . . My name was alluded to. The writer appeals to young men to come out and assert themselves, and not to allow themselves to be used by their seniors. That they have the balance of power, and they should use it to control the affairs of the Territory. They should pay no attention to the counsels of the Church. My son Abram replied in a communication over the signature 'Utah Boy,' which appears in this afternoon's 'Evening News.'"

In one of our home testimony meetings, someone said that there was no danger of his ever losing the Faith. In his enthusiasm he made a definite statement to that effect. I well remember Father's response to it. "Don't ever say that, my son," he said. "You never know in what way a great temptation may come to you, or what trial to your faith. Pray always that your belief in the gospel may be strengthened day by day, and that you may never lose that assurance. The Evil One is always ready to direct his terrible ef-

forts to destroy those who are too sure of themselves. Having faith and knowing that the gospel is true are not enough. To keep that Faith and knowledge requires continual vigilance. We must live the gospel as well as believe it."

I think no one ever sought more constantly and consistently to perfect himself than my father did. He accepted literally the admonitions of the Savior. The oft repeated "Follow Me" was a perpetual stimulant to him. And "Be ye perfect" he accepted as something the Savior really meant. Of course Father, with all his seeking, never reached perfection. But his defects were human frailties, and not the lack of spiritual desire. My father's life should have been an inspiration to all who knew him, especially his family; but unhappily it is more easy to drift than to struggle. And I now recall my father's words, "Neglected opportunities will stand against you at the end of life." In teaching his children the value and dignity of work he often spoke with pride of how he had done so many different kinds of hard work, "menial labor" as some people would call it. To him those hardships were a necessary and vital part of his education and development.

People who met Father were conscious of his gracious manners and his smiling eyes. His perfect manners were the result of his kind heart, and his smiling eyes revealed his cheerful nature. These qualities were so much a part of him that others were naturally impressed by

them. A vivid remembrance to me of Father is his perfect diction. He had an exceptional command of language, but his speech was simple and direct. How often he corrected us for the use of extravagant expressions showing us how a simple word would have been so much more effective. Profanity he was never known to use. The name of the Diety or the Redeemer he spoke only in the most reverent spirit.

Once Father learned that two of the boys had been quarrelling and had called each other bad names. With our teaching that was a grave offense. Father talked to them very seriously. And then, to make the lesson more impressive, he washed out their mouths with soap and water. The talk was impressive, and even the ablution had a good effect. They always remembered the lesson and acknowledged the benefit of it. But in relating the circumstances afterward they were in perfect agreement in saying, "The worst of the whole thing was, Father made us kiss each other."

It didn't need a great amount of inquiry to discover who had betrayed them. That boy received immediate and adequate chastisement behind the barn, which he too always remembered.

Quarrelling was almost unknown in our family. There wasn't much to wrangle about. And Father's joy of living was so born and bred in us that there were few disagreements among his children; never as I re-

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## MUSIC

when I believe I have more sense, I am strongly of the opinion that hymn singing is primarily a mode and part of worship."

Our best professional directors, when they lead a congregation in hymns, merely lead gently along, according to the teachings of the Good Shepherd, whose example we are trying to follow. We shall have a little more to say about this in a month from now.

Third, we still need to give some care to the selection of songs. Our *Deseret Sunday School Songs* contain many songs intended primarily for children. Such songs are less useful in adult Sunday Schools and services. As an example, it would seem clear that adults will draw more spiritual strength from "O Thou Kind and Gracious Father," than from the children's song, "The Opening Buds of Springtime."

Leaders sometimes choose songs for a rousing response, avoiding those of spiritual power. Many people will agree that that which touches the heart is of more influence than that which produces a loud sound. Let us not neglect hymns of spiritual significance, such as "Lord, Accept Our True Devotion," "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," "Let the Holy Spirit's Promptings be Your Guide," "Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire." Let us sing these songs often.

We hope that the application of the three principles here outlined will increase the enjoyment and spiritual quality and strength of congregational singing.

—Alexander Schreiner

Note: Sacramental music and gem for December is found in the September issue.

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## RECOLLECTIONS OF MY FATHER

(Continued from page 466)

call, between "half" brothers and sisters. This was due largely to the respect we had for our father and the wish not to hurt or offend him. And also we had a respect and affection for one another which was also due to inheritance and training. And as for our mothers, I think our own sisters could not have agreed

more amicably than they did. If there were ever jealousy or ill feeling it was never shown. I never heard one wife say a disagreeable thing to or about one of the others. They were always helpful to one another and friendly. That was one of the many reasons for our happy home life.

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