

THE IDEA OF PRE-EXISTENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORMON THOUGHT

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THE MORMON BELIEF that the individual spirit of man existed in the presence of God before the creation of the world is unique in modern Christianity. Mormons have rejected the Creator/creature dichotomy of Patristic theology and its logical correlaries, *creatio ex nihilo* and the idea of God as a single, infinite Absolute. Mormons consider man one of the given entities of the universe, the necessary, self-existing offspring of God and therefore of the same ultimate nature as God—uncreate and capable of eternal progression. Man, as necessary being, could not *not* exist; his primal self is not created and cannot be. Nevertheless, the history of the idea of pre-existence in Mormon thought is one of varying interpretation, of refinement and controversy. The controversy stems largely from the inherent tension in a finitistic theology from an earlier period of absolutist preconceptions. Nowhere is this tension more evident in Mormonism than in its doctrine of pre-existence.

Absolutist Preconceptions: 1830–1835.

The doctrine encountered by the earliest Mormon converts was not a significant departure from the Catholic/Protestant view of the day which stressed the Creator/creature dichotomy and a single, infinite and absolute God. The doctrine of pre-existence of souls had not been a part of Christian thought since 543 A.D. when that doctrine was declared "anathema" by a

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council at Constantinople, due in great part to the influence of Greek thought on Christian ideas of God and man.¹ The earliest publications of the Mormon Church defined God in terms borrowed from orthodox Trinitarianism as the metaphysical basis of all contingent existence manifesting himself in the person of Jesus Christ.² From the very beginning, the Mormon view of man, which like the Methodist stressed man's free will and consequent moral responsibility, was more positive than the then prevalent Calvinistic position of absolute predestination and salvation by grace. Yet, the Pauline/Augustinian doctrine of the depravity of the natural man was supported in the Book of Mormon by Alma and Mosiah, and throughout the Book of Mormon man is viewed as a creature of God.³ The Creator/creature dichotomy was accepted without revision by early Mormon commentators, as shown by a philosophical rejoinder in the *Evening and Morning Star* of October 1832 in language reminiscent of Patristic theologians: "the annihilation of a being that subsists requireth an act of power similar to that which gave it existence at first. . . . The Creator, who having created our souls at first by an act of His will can either eternally preserve them or absolutely annihilate them."⁴ Thus, man was merely a contingent being created from non-being and could lapse into non-being once again if God willed it. Warren Cowdery's letter in the May 1835 *Messenger and Advocate* echoed a similar belief: "Man is dependent on the great first cause and is constantly upheld by Him, therefore justly amenable to Him."⁵

The metaphysical foundations of Mormonism before 1835 were incompatible with the radical pluralism inherent in the idea of man's necessary existence. Although several scriptural "proof-texts" originating from this era are now cited to support the doctrine of man's pre-existence, the earliest converts seem to have been altogether unaware of the doctrine.⁶ In the absence of the clarifications of the Nauvoo era, it is to be expected that the saints assumed the usage and meaning pervading the theological concepts of the day and established by nearly fifteen centuries of absolutist elucidation. For example, the word "create" assumed *creatio ex nihilo*, the term "intelligence" implied a knowledge of truth rather than self-existing entity, and the term "spirit" did not connote a quasi-material substance.⁷ However, the Joseph Smith translation of the Bible completed in 1833 and a revelation received in May of 1833 (now known as D&C 93), indicate that Joseph understood a concept of "ideal pre-existence," that is, existence which is expressed in terms of God's foreknowledge (ontologically mind-dependent).⁸ The May 1833 revelation stated:

Ye were in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth, and truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.⁹

This statement, coupled with the declaration of the new translation that all things were created spiritually before their manifestation on earth, suggests

that man pre-existed "ideally" as a particular of the necessary and all-encompassing truth entertained in God's infinite foreknowledge.¹⁰ Such an interpretation is consistent with the contemporary usage of the word "spiritual," implying only a conceptual or intellectual creation.¹¹ The treatment of the first chapter of Genesis as a "conceptual blue-print" formulated by God before creation, was a popular means of resolving the seeming contradiction between Genesis 1:26–27 and 2:4 as Joseph had done in the Book of Moses.¹² Such a doctrine was not foreign to the absolutist orientation of thought prevalent at the time. For example, Georg Hegel, Joseph Smith's contemporary, formulated a philosophy known as Absolute Idealism in which persons were considered as differentiations of the Absolute Spirit (*Geist*) or the Truth of Totality perceiving itself.¹³ Long before the philosophical Idealism prominent in the early 1800's, Gregory of Nyssa suggested that "in the power of God's foreknowledge . . . all the fullness of human nature had pre-existence (and to this the prophetic writing bears witness, which says that God 'knoweth all things before they are'), and in the creation of individuals . . . the heavenly view was laid as their foundation in the original will of God."¹⁴

Progressive Pluralism: 1835–1844.

Several facets of Mormon thought combined to develop a theological climate conducive to the idea of man's necessary existence. First, as early as 1835 the persons of the Trinity were distinguished and, as a result, the ultimate basis of existence was defined in pluralistic terms.¹⁵ Second, Joseph Smith began his work on the Book of Abraham concurrent with the study of Hebrew in the School of the Prophets.¹⁶ Third, the idea that humans could become gods allowed for the possibility that they were ultimately like God—uncreated.¹⁷ Fourth, reality was bifurcated into two fundamental types of matter: spiritual or "purified," invisible matter and more coarse, visible matter.¹⁸ As a result of this philosophical materialism, that which existed spiritually or "ideally" also existed "really" (ontologically mind-independent).

By 1839 Joseph Smith had publicly rejected the notion of *creatio ex nihilo* and introduced his seemingly well developed concept of the necessary existence of man. He stated simply: "The Spirit of Man is not a created being; it existed from Eternity and will exist to eternity. Anything created cannot be eternal, and earth, water &c—all these had their existence in an elementary state from Eternity."¹⁹ To support the doctrine of the necessary existence of man, Joseph often cited a statement of the earliest Christian neo-Platonists: "That which has a beginning will surely have an end. . . . If the soul of man had a beginning it will surely have an end."²⁰ While the Christian apologists used such logic to oppose man's necessary existence, Joseph affirmed man's eternal existence in both past and future. Ironically, both apologists and Joseph Smith adopted identical statements to affirm diametrically opposed views.

Joseph elaborated upon the concept of man's pre-mortal existence in the years that followed. There can be little doubt that he intended the "real" pre-existence of man's primal self. In several discourses and in the Book of Abraham, Joseph enumerated activities of pre-existent man that require individual, self-conscious and autonomous entities. For instance, Joseph stated of pre-mortal entities:

The first step in the salvation of men is the laws of eternal and self-existent principles. Spirits are eternal. At the first organization in heaven we were all present and saw the Savior chosen, and appointed, and the plan of salvation made and we sanctioned it.²¹

The Book of Abraham, published in March of 1842, clarified man's self-existent nature. According to the Book of Abraham, individuals existed from eternity as "intelligences," and although unequal, they "have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal."²² The inherently unequal capacity of intelligences implies that they were considered differentiated, individual and autonomous entities from all eternity. In addition, the Book of Abraham detailed Abraham's vision of the pre-earth council—a vision remarkably like Abraham's vision in the Apocalypse of Abraham.²³

Joseph Smith's concept of man culminated in April of 1844. In the King Follett discourse, he presented a view of man unique to the Christian world and rarely matched in the history of thought for its positive characterization of man. Joseph was well aware of the wider philosophical implications of his view, for he stated that the belief that man was created *ex nihilo* "lessens the character of man," while the doctrine of self-existent man was "calculated to exalt man."²⁴ He clarified his thought by multiplying descriptive nouns about the part of man which necessarily exists:

We say that God himself is a self-existent God. Who told you so? It's correct enough, but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? . . . Man existed in spirit; the mind of man—the intelligent part—is as immortal as, and is coequal with, God himself.²⁵

Joseph's doctrine of the necessary existence of man and rejection of *creatio ex nihilo* also had serious logical consequences for his concept of God. In contrast to the absolute Being of traditional theology, classically described as static, unconditioned and unrelated, Joseph taught that God was once as man is, had actually become God and that He is conditioned by and related to the uncreated quantities of reality. He also taught that men could become as God and, as a logical corollary, he taught the plurality of gods. Joseph taught that rather than Being itself, God is a being among beings. The necessary existence of man and the ultimate structure and substance of reality imposed further conditions upon the traditional omnipotence of God. Joseph taught that God did not create these realities and that *He could not have done so*.

Neo-Absolutism: 1845–1905.

Soon after the death of Joseph Smith, a concept of pre-existence became prominent which was more congenial to absolutism. In this concept, only diffuse "spirit element" was considered to be uncreated; autonomous individual existence arose only after the organization of this eternal substance into a spirit person. This concept was an outgrowth of the seeming paradox between the doctrine emphasized by Brigham Young and popularized by Eliza R. Snow's poem, "O My Father," that individuals are literally begotten of divine parents and the affirmation of Joseph Smith that man, in an elementary state, is eternal.²⁶ As a result, individual pre-existence was thought to begin with literal spiritual birth, while before this birth only disorganized spirit existed. Joseph Lee Robinson, an early convert and close associate of both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, reflected upon this paradox (if his journal chronology is accurate) sometime in late 1845 while still in Nauvoo:

Some elders said that the prophet Joseph Smith should have said that our spirits existed eternally with God, the question then arose, How is God the Father of our spirits? . . . I inquired of several of the brethren how that could be—a father and son and the son as old as the father. There was not a person that could or that would even try to explain the matter.²⁷

Robinson's intuitions appear to have been accurate, for Joseph Smith apparently had not taught that individual existence began at spirit birth. Joseph did not envision a state of existence for individuals before their existence as spirits simply because spirits were uncreate and self-existent.²⁸ Nevertheless, Robinson claims to have received a revelation solving the paradox of heavenly birth in the pre-existence. He understood

that all matter was eternal, that it never had a beginning and that it should never have an end and that the spirits of all men were organized of a pure material or matter upon the principles of male and female so that there was a time when my immortal spirit as well as every other man's spirit that ever was born into the world—that is to say, there was a moment when the spirit was organized or begotten or born so that the spirit has a father and the material or matter, that our tabernacles are composed of is eternal.²⁹

Parely P. Pratt, a member of the Quorum of Apostles and close friend of Joseph Smith, expressed his understanding that an individual intelligence results from the organization of a more primitive spiritual element. In April of 1853, Parley declared,

Organized intelligence. What are they made of? They are made of the element which we call spirit. . . . Let a given quantity of this element, thus endowed, or capacitated, be organized in the size and form of man . . . what would we call this individual, organized portion of the spiritual element? We would call it a spiritual body, an individual intelligence, an agent endowed with life, with a degree of indepen-

dence, or inherent will, with the powers of motion, of thought, and with the attributes of moral, intellectual, and sympathetic affections and emotions.³⁰

Perhaps the most able and thorough exposition of Mormonism's unrefined doctrine of pre-existence came from the pen of Orson Pratt, Parley's younger brother. Orson was the first to attempt a systematic exposition of Joseph Smith's thought. In 1853 Orson published *The Seer*, elaborating upon ideas expressed in his 1849 "The Absurdities of Immaterialism" and in 1851 with "The Great First Cause." Building upon Joseph Smith's modified materialism, Pratt constructed an ultra-materialistic system reminiscent of the thought of Gottfried Leibniz in which all matter necessarily existed in the form of ultimately indivisible particles possessing a degree of inherent intelligence.³¹ According to Pratt, "each particle eternally existed prior to its organization; each was enabled to perceive its own existence; each had the power of self-motion, each would be an intelligent living being of itself. . . . In this independent separate condition, it would be capable of being governed by laws, adapted to the amount of knowledge and experience gained during its past experience."³² In the course of time, these eternal particle entities would be "organized in the womb of the celestial female" thereby creating an individual spirit body. Thus, through spiritual pregnancy and birth, existence began on a new level. Orson stated that "the particles that enter into the organization of the infant spirit are placed in a new sphere of action . . . the particles organized in an infant spirit can no longer act, or feel, or think as independent individuals, but the law to control them in their new sphere requires them to act, and feel, and think in union."³³ In effect, each intelligence would be analogous to a cell of a body which had its own existence but which formed another individual on an aggregate level. Thus, individual identity was created with spiritual birth, even though each intelligence or particle was uncreated. Pratt called the inherent intelligence in these primeval particles "The Great First Cause." He claimed that "while we are obliged to admit the eternity of the substance and its capacities, on the other hand, we are compelled to admit a beginning to the organizations of particles of this substance. . . . The present qualities of our minds are not eternal, but are the results of the combinations of anterior qualities, which in their turn are again the results of the exercise of the eternal capacities."³⁴

Despite Pratt's standing in the Quorum of Apostles, his views were almost immediately censured by Brigham Young. In response to Young's general criticism that some items in *The Seer* were not "Sound Doctrine," Pratt assumed that Young was referring to his concept of God's attributes.³⁵ In reality, the conflict between Pratt and Young was a much more fundamental dispute over absolutist and finitist theologies. Although Pratt's idea of eternal, individual particles seemingly implied a materialistic pluralism, Pratt interpreted his doctrine as a Monistic Absolutism and proposed a pantheistic concept of God—a concept which identifies God with whatever is real. Pratt explained to Young in a letter:

I have argued that . . . the Unity, Eternity and of the attributes, such as "the fullness of Truth," light, love, wisdom & knowledge, dwelling in countless numbers of tabernacles in numberless worlds; and that the oneness of these attributes is what is called in both ancient and modern revelations, the One God besides whom there is none other God neither before Him neither shall there be after Him. I have still argued that the Plurality of God only had reference to the number of persons or tabernacles wherein this one God, or in other words, the fullness of these attributes dwells.³⁶

In the ensuing years President Young opposed Orson Pratt's concept of God and rejected the implications of his opinions on pre-existence. The crux of the conflict was Young's criticism that Pratt worshipped the attributes of Absolute Being rather than God the person, while in turn, Pratt rejected Young's ultra-personalistic view of God as an exalted man forever becoming greater in dominion and knowledge.³⁷ Another issue of contention was the extent of God's omniscience. Pratt asserted that the scriptures taught that God was perfect and, if perfect in knowledge, could not progress in knowledge.³⁸ Brigham Young, on the other hand, claimed that God could progress in knowledge because the body of truth is infinite and cannot be fully encompassed; otherwise, eternity would be limited—a contradiction.³⁹ Pratt's notion of God, however, was merely a logical corollary of his idea of pre-existent particles. In Pratt's interpretation of God's attributes, the idea that all beings, including the Father and the Son, were the result of intelligent particles meant that the sum of their individual parts comprised the Intelligence of God, or the essence of Deity which we should worship.⁴⁰ In 1856 Pratt taught,

Each part of this substance is all-wise and all-powerful, possessing the same knowledge and truth. The essence can be divided like other matter, but the truth that each possesses is one truth, and is indivisible; and because of the oneness of the quality, all these parts are called ONE God. There is a plurality of substance, but a unity of quality; and it is this unity which constitutes the one God we worship. When we worship the Father, we do not worship merely his substance, but we worship the attributes of that substance.⁴¹ (emphasis in original)

The conflict between Pratt and Young resulted in an official denunciation of Pratt's views by the First Presidency in 1860 and again in 1865. Citing specific passages from Pratt's writings, President Young in conjunction with his counselors Heber C. Kimball and Daniel H. Wells, objected to Pratt's idea of God's absolute omniscience and discounted the concept of a "Great First Cause." The 1865 denunciation specifically challenged Pratt's view that "every part of the Holy Spirit, however minute and infinitesimal, possessed 'every intellectual or moral attribute possessed by the Father and the Son,'" and that all beings were the result of self-organized, eternal particles of matter. In relation to the origin of pre-existent beings, the First Presidency stated that the church would have to be

content with the knowledge that *from all eternity there had been organized beings, in an organized form, possessing superior and controlling power*

to govern what brother Pratt calls 'self-moving, all-wise and all powerful particles of matter,' and that it was neither rational nor consistent with the revelations of God and with reason and philosophy, to believe that these latter Forces and Powers had existed prior to the Being who controlled and governed them.⁴² (emphasis added)

Even though the First Presidency's statement appears to establish the doctrine that "organized being" necessarily exists, when analyzed in relation to Brigham Young's contemporary teachings, it merely indicates that there never was a time when organized beings did *not* exist. Brigham's idea was one of eternal regression of progenitors, the doctrine that all fathers had fathers *ad infinitum*.⁴³ As in the theology of the great apologist Origen, who alone among the Patristic Fathers maintained a belief in the pre-existence of souls, the idea that beings have always existed does not mean that any given individual or group of individuals has always existed.⁴⁴ The statement did show that Pratt's ideas of particles as self-organizing and his notion that we should worship the Intelligence created by the sum of their parts were in error. Perhaps the point of both statements was that because they could not "explain how the first organized Being originated," any attempt to do so was merely philosophical speculation.

Ironically, Brigham Young's own position on man's ultimate origin was somewhat equivocal. He taught both the "eternity of man's soul" and the contingency of that soul, a creation dependent on God for its existence.⁴⁵ His position is probably represented best by his private attempts to correct Orson Pratt's views. According to the Wilford Woodruff Journal, Brigham told Orson Pratt that all beings would "never cease [sic] to learn except it was the Sons of Perdition they would continue to decrease untill [sic] they became dissolved back into their native Element & lost their Identity."⁴⁶ Brigham's tacit assumption here and in many of his discourses seems to have been that individuals were organized from a "native Element" wherein there was no personal identity.⁴⁷ In fact, neither Pratt nor Young would have argued that personal identity existed before spiritual birth. Brigham Young also believed that pre-existent spirits were begotten "in the celestial world" as spiritual offspring of Adam and Eve—a view which Pratt thought unscriptural and repugnant.⁴⁸

The conflict between absolute and finite theologies continued after the deaths of President Young and Orson Pratt. Just three years after Pratt's death in 1881, Charles W. Penrose, then chief editor of the *Deseret News*, delivered a discourse that adapted Pratt's absolutist view of God despite the statements of the First Presidency. Penrose claimed that "God is not everywhere present personally, but He is omnipresent in the power of that spirit—the Holy Spirit—which animates all created beings."⁴⁹ Penrose also taught that God's omnipresent spirit, or Intelligence, existed before the organization of the person of God.

If God is an individual spirit and dwells in a body, the question will arise, "Is He the Eternal Father?" Yes, he is the Eternal Father. "Is it a

fact that He never had a beginning?" In the elementary particles of His organism, He did not. But if He is an organized Being, there must have been a time when that being was organized. This, some will say, would infer that God had a beginning. This spirit which pervades all things, which is the light of all things, by which our heavenly Father operates, by which He is omnipotent, never had a beginning and never will have an end. It is the light of truth; it is the spirit of intelligence.⁵⁰

In Penrose' view, "this eternal, beginningless, endless spirit of intelligence" which "exists wherever there is a particle of material substance" as the basis of being, the omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient reality is prior even to the person of God. Such a Being could not be conditioned by exterior reality because He already comprehends the whole of reality.

Penrose' doctrine of God also necessitated the "creation" of individual man. He explained, "The individual, the organized person may have had a beginning, but that spirit of which and by which they [were] organized never had a beginning. . . . The primal particles never had a beginning. They have been organized in different shapes; the organism had a beginning, but the atoms of which it is composed never had . . . the elementary parts of matter as well as of spirit, using ordinary language, never had a beginning."⁵¹ Thus, Penrose' doctrine was merely Pratt's neo-Absolutist pantheism.

The postmortem popularity of Pratt's doctrine, however, did not go unchallenged by the First Presidency. In June of 1892, President Wilford Woodruff, in company with his counselor George Q. Cannon, was requested to come to St. George to aid in settling a dispute between Bishop Edward Bunker and his first counselor Myron Abbott, both of Bunkerville, Nevada. Apparently, confusion had arisen over Young's doctrine that spirits were begotten on another world as offspring of Adam and Eve and his view that spirits are eternal. In December of 1890, Bishop Bunker charged, "our spirits were not begotten by God but were created out of the elements" by Christ's organizing power.⁵² Abbott, on the other hand, maintained that spirits "were begotten in the spirit world the same as we are begotten here and that Adam is the father of our spirits."⁵³ Bishop Bunker's father was summoned before the St. George Stake High Council to explain his views, "not to try him, but to settle differences on Doctrinal points." Father Bunker explained to President Woodruff that "the Book of Covenants says in the beginning light was with the Father. One Spirit was above another, but none had beginning nor end. The Spirit is the intelligence and this intelligence is God and that intelligence of the Father was in Jesus and we worship this intelligence."⁵⁴

In response to Bunker's views, President Cannon referred to the trouble between Brigham and Orson Pratt over this very issue and corrected the view "that it was right to worship intelligence that was in God the Eternal Father and not God (as an embodied person)."⁵⁵ President Cannon distinguished between the Father and the Son, saying we pray to the Father in the name of the Son, and refuted the idea that Deity was composed of particles, each of which possessed the attributes of God.⁵⁶ However, neither Woodruff nor

Cannon specifically disagreed with Pratt's doctrine of pre-existence although it was necessarily implied in the notion of God which they rejected.

In reality, the origin of man's identity was rarely addressed. The view that man originated when spirit matter was organized into an individual through literal spiritual birth seems to have been the *only* view consistently elucidated from 1845–1905. For example, Benjamin F. Johnson's explanation of Joseph Smith's doctrine probably represented the understanding of many saints in the early 1900's:

[Joseph] was the first in this age to teach "Substantialism"—the Eternity of Matter; that no part or particle of the great universe could become annihilated or destroyed—That Light and Life and Spirit were one—That all light and heat are the "Glory of God which is his power" that fills "immensity of space" and is the Life of all things, and permeates with latent life and heat every particle of which all worlds are composed. That Light or Spirit, and matter are the first two principles of the universe or of being. That they are self-existent, co-existent, indestructible and eternal. And from these two elements both our spirits and our bodies were formulated.⁵⁷

Personal Eternalism: 1905 to Present.

The issue of personal eternalism became a subject of much controversy in the early 1900's. The issue was addressed in *Outlines of Mormon Philosophy*, a little known work by Lycurgus Wilson, written apparently in the Salt Lake Temple, and presented to the First Presidency "for the helpful criticism of their committee."⁵⁸ Wilson rejected the neo-Absolutist view "that spirits owe their origin to God" and concluded that "intelligences always were and always will be individual entities, and, however varied in capacity, never had a beginning and can never be annihilated."⁵⁹ Wilson's work was published by the *Deseret News*, the official publishing arm of the Church.

B. H. Roberts, a President of the Seventy, also took exception to the neo-Absolutist view that man, as an autonomous individual, was created. Elaborating on his views expressed in his *New Witness for God*, Roberts read a statement to the First Presidency supporting belief in the existence of "independent, uncreated, self-existent intelligences."⁶⁰ Roberts claimed that even before spiritual birth and consequent organization of a spirit body, man existed as an individual, autonomous and self-conscious entity known as an intelligence. Noting objections to his view of personal eternalism, Roberts stated that his view absolved God from responsibility for moral evil and explained man's inherent moral freedom and inequality. The First Presidency allowed Roberts to publish his views in the *Improvement Era* in April of 1907 with their appended approval: "Elder Roberts submitted the following paper to the First Presidency and a number of the Twelve Apostles, none of whom found anything objectionable in it, or contrary to the revealed word of God, and therefore favor its publication."⁶¹

Roberts met with opposition, however, when he attempted to incorporate similar views in his 1911 *Seventy's Course in Theology*. Charles W. Penrose, in

particular, objected to Roberts' view that "intelligences were self-existent entities before they entered into the organization of the spirit."⁶² Penrose, then a member of the First Presidency, preferred Pratt's view that "Intelligence" referred to an attribute of God in Joseph Smith's teachings rather than to man as a personal entity from all eternity. Both Penrose and Anthon H. Lund, members of the First Presidency under Joseph F. Smith, persuaded Roberts "to eliminate his theories in regard to intelligences as conscious self-existing beings or entities before being organized into spirit." Lund recorded, "This doctrine has raised much discussion and the inference on which he builds his theory is very vague. The Prophet's speech delivered as a funeral sermon over King Follett is the basis of Bro. Roberts doctrine: namely, where he speaks of man's eternity claim. Roberts wants to prove that man is then co-eval with God."⁶³

Even though Roberts agreed to remove passages referring to intelligences before spirit birth, the *Seventy's Course in Theology* is very explicit about man's uncreated intelligence. Roberts derived six attributes inherent in man's primal intelligence calculated to clarify man's eternal existence as a personal identity. Roberts also asserted that much of the confusion about the subject stemmed from inexact word usage. Noting possible equivocations of meaning, he attempted to reconcile the pre-Nauvoo usage of terms such as "intelligence," and "spirit" with that of the Nauvoo era, especially in the King Follett discourse. Roberts noted, "it is observed that he [Joseph Smith] uses the words "Intelligence" and "spirit" interchangeably—one for the other; and yet we can discern that it is the "intelligence of spirits," not "spirits" entire that is the subject of his thought. It is the "Intelligence of Spirits" that he declares uncreated and uncreatable—eternal as God is."⁶⁴

The First Presidency demonstrated its opposition to the idea of man's necessary existence again in 1912 when it removed the King Follett discourse from Roberts' *Documentary History of the Church*. Charles Penrose, in particular, doubted the authenticity and correctness of the reporting of the sermon. George Albert Smith agreed that "the report of the sermon might not be authentic and I feared that it contained some things that might be contrary to the truth."⁶⁵

At least one member of the Church, John A. Widtsoe, accepted Roberts' theory that intelligences existed as individual entities before they were begotten spirits. When he incorporated his view in *A Rational Theology* to be used as a source manual by the Church, however, Joseph F. Smith personally stopped its publication. In December of 1914, Joseph F. Smith wired Anthon Lund from Missouri to postpone publication until he could examine its contents. Upon examination, Lund disagreed with Widtsoe's idea "of the origin of God, which he makes an evolution from intelligences and being superior to the others He became God."⁶⁶ Commenting on Widtsoe's doctrine Lund said, "I do not like to think of a time when there was no God." When President Smith returned to Salt Lake City on December 11, he went over the work with Widtsoe and Lund and "eliminated from it all that pertained to intelligences before they became begotten spirits as that would only be speculation."⁶⁷

Accordingly, Widtsoe's *A Rational Theology* conceded that "to speculate upon the condition of man when conscious life was just dawning is most interesting, but so little is known about that far-off day that such speculation is profitless."⁶⁸ Widtsoe cautiously affirmed that "All that is really clear . . . is that man has existed 'from the beginning,' and that, from the beginning, he has possessed distinct individuality impossible of confusion with any other individuality among the hosts of intelligent beings."⁶⁹ Like Roberts, Widtsoe delineated inherent capacities of intelligences: "In addition to his power to learn and the consciousness of his own existence, the primeval personality possessed, from 'the beginning,' the distinguishing characteristics of every intelligent, conscious, thinking being—an independent and individual will."⁷⁰

As both Lund and Penrose intimated, the consequences of accepting the idea of man's necessary existence bothered them. In contrast to their need for an infinite Being who is absolutely in control of the universe, both Roberts and Widtsoe insisted that individual eternalism necessitated the idea that God is necessarily conditioned, a finite Being. Widtsoe emphatically declared, "One thing seems clear . . . that the Lord who is part of the universe is subject to eternal laws It is only logical to believe that a progressive God has not always possessed his present absolute position."⁷¹ In a classic confrontation between absolute and finite theologies, Roberts echoed Brigham Young's charge to Orson Pratt that God is, above all else, a personal Being:

God cannot be considered as absolutely infinite, because we are taught by the facts of revelation that absolute infinity cannot hold as to God; as a person, God has limitations, and that which has limitations is not absolutely infinite. If God is conceived of as absolutely infinite, in his substance as in his attributes, then all idea of personality respecting him must be given up; for personality implies limitations.⁷²

The doctrine of individual eternalism seems to have prevailed in Mormon thought for a time despite the reluctance of the First Presidency to endorse a specific doctrine of pre-existence specifying whether man, as an individual entity, is the result of God's creative action or necessarily exists. For instance, shortly after Widtsoe's *A Rational Theology* was published, James E. Talmage, then President of the University of Utah, affirmed,

In the antemortal eternities we developed with individual differences and varied capacities. So far as we can peer into the past by the aid of revealed light we can see that there was always a gradation of intelligence, and consequently of ability, among spirits Individualism is an attribute of the soul, and as truly eternal as the soul itself.⁷³

Before his death in 1933, B. H. Roberts sought to solidly establish the doctrine of the necessary existence of man in Mormon thought. In his yet unpublished manuscript, *The Truth, The Way, The Life*, Roberts said, "The conception of the existence of independent, uncreated, self-existent intelligences, who by the inherent nature of them are of various degrees of intelligence, and moral quality, differing from each other in many ways, yet alike

in their eternity and their freedom relieves God of the responsibility for the nature and moral status of intelligences in all stages of their development."⁷⁴ In addition to reaffirming the philosophical value of the doctrine of eternal individualism as an explanation for the purpose of man's mortal existence and of evil, he also refined the inherent capacities of an intelligence even before spiritual birth:

[Intelligences] are uncreated; self-existent entities, necessarily self-conscious, and otherwise consciousness—they are conscious of the "me" and the "not me." They possess powers of comparison and discrimination without which the term "intelligence" would be a mere solecism. They discern between evil and good; between good and better; they possess will or freedom—within certain limits at least. The power, among others, to determine upon a given course of conduct as against any other course of conduct. The individual intelligence can think his own thoughts, act wisely or foolishly; do right or wrong. To accredit an intelligence with fewer or less important powers than these would be to deny him intelligence altogether.⁷⁵

Because of disagreement among church authorities over its contents, Roberts' most cherished manuscript was never published.⁷⁶ While his idea of pre-Adamites was the single most offensive topic mentioned by the committee of review, his view of the nature of intelligences was explicitly mentioned as "Points on Doctrine in Question." Significantly, the committee of review, headed by George Albert Smith, was willing to accept Roberts' definition of an "intelligence" as "that eternal entity which was not created." However, the committee did not agree with Roberts that intelligences were morally autonomous in the sense that they could "rebel against truth and God." The August 10, 1929 report of the committee to the Council of the Twelve Apostles stated, "In the opinion of the committee the intention is that these intelligences after they became *spirits* may rebel, as Lucifer did. Can this be clarified to say this? We do not have any revelation stating that intelligences have power to rebel."⁷⁷

After Roberts had reviewed the suggestions of the committee, he again presented his manuscript for their consideration. On April 15 of 1930, the committee reported to Heber J. Grant and counselors that Elder Roberts' "use of 'Mind, spirit and soul,' appears confusing to us" and that contrary to Roberts' insistent claims, "intelligence as an entity . . . cannot rebel against light and truth."⁷⁸ In effect, Roberts had refused to alter a single item of his manuscript requested by the committee.

In 1936 the attempt of Roberts and Widtsoe to refine Mormon thought on man's ultimate origin was again rebuffed by Joseph Fielding Smith, the son of President Joseph F. Smith and a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Smith criticized those who sought to define the doctrine of the Church on the nature of uncreated intelligence. Probably with Roberts and Widtsoe in mind, Smith asserted,

Some of our writers have endeavored to explain what an intelligence is, but to do so is futile, for we have never been given any insight into

this matter beyond what the Lord had fragmentarily revealed. We know, however, that there is something called an intelligence which always existed. It is the real eternal part of man, which is not created or made. This intelligence combined with the spirit constitutes a spiritual entity or individual. The spirit of man, then, is a combination of the intelligence and the spirit which is an entity begotten of God.⁷⁹

In effect, the position taken by Joseph Fielding Smith was amenable to both the notion that personal identity is created when differentiated intelligence is organized into a spirit individual or to the idea that individual identity exists inherently within created intelligences.

In spite of such cautionary statements, numerous Mormon writers have assumed personal eternalism to be Mormonism's official doctrine at least since 1940. Such is the case with Gilbert Orme, *The Four Estates of Man* (1948), Sterling McMurrin, *The Philosophical Foundations of Mormonism* (1959), *The Theological Foundations of Mormonism* (1965), Truman Madsen, *Eternal Man* (1966), B. F. Cummings III, *The Eternal Individual Self* (1968), and to a lesser degree R. Clayton Brough, *Our First Estate* (1977). Moreover, Mormon thought appears to be well established in metaphysical pluralism and finitistic theology despite vestigial rhetoric expressing faith in the vocabulary of traditional absolutism.⁸⁰

The doctrine of man's necessary existence has not gone unchallenged however. Since 1960, a philosophy known as Mormon neo-orthodoxy has arisen that emphasizes man's contingency, the creation of man as a conscious entity and God's absoluteness and complete otherness in contrast to traditional Mormon thought.⁸¹ The most influential proponent of Mormon neo-orthodoxy is probably Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Greatly influenced by former President Joseph Fielding Smith, Elder McConkie has insisted on an absolute conception of God, including his omniscience and omnipotence in a classical sense.⁸² He also maintains that "intelligence or spirit element became intelligences *after* the spirits were born as individual entities."⁸³ In response to an enquiry for the official position of the Church on the status of intelligences before spiritual birth, McConkie said, "As far as I know there is no official pronouncement on the subject at hand In my judgment there was no agency prior to spirit birth and we did not exist as entities until that time."⁸⁴ As late as 1975, Truman G. Madsen, holder of the Richard L. Evans Chair of Christian Understanding, was cautioned to "exercise care in ascribing to intelligence more than the revelations themselves."⁸⁵ This caution, undoubtedly intended to temper Madsen's enthusiasm for the philosophical possibilities of the idea of man's necessary existence, is representative of the Church's present insistence on a non-codified theology. It also illustrates distrust among Mormons generally of philosophical elucidation and consequences of doctrine. Whenever the issue of man's eternal existence has been raised by writers of Church priesthood or auxiliary lessons in recent years (at least eight times) the matter has been described as pure speculation by the reviewing committee and deleted from the lesson.⁸⁶ The conflict between absolute and finite theologies has yet to be resolved in Mormon thought.

Implications and Conclusions.

The doctrine of pre-existence as a focal point in the development of Mormon thought is the subject of no small controversy. Much of the present conflict between absolute and finite theologies in Mormon thought stems from absolutist preconceptions inherited by early Mormons from Protestant/Catholic theologies with their absolutist connotations. Indeed, most Mormons still seem unaware that expressions of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence cannot mean for them what they mean to Protestants and Catholics. Many Mormons, and probably most non-Mormons, have failed to grasp the wide latitude of possible beliefs which can be tolerated within the tradition of Mormon thought. Although many view Mormon thought as restrictive, it is in fact more *inclusive* than *exclusive*, more thought-provoking than thought-binding. For instance, an individual member's beliefs may range from an absolutist view to a traditionally heretical, finitist view of God and man and still remain well within the bounds of traditional Mormon expressions of faith—a latitude far beyond the tolerance of Protestantism or Catholicism. The Church's reluctance to clarify its theology on an official level has left it up to individual members to think through and work out their own understanding of and relationship to God. In short, the burden of a consistent theology and vibrant relationship with God in Mormonism is not a corporate responsibility; indeed it cannot be. Rather, it is an individual burden that reflects the unique relationship of God with each member. And each member must be willing to face the implications of his or her beliefs.

The logical result of the neo-absolutist doctrine of Orson Pratt and Charles Penrose would be an "impersonal pantheism." In their neo-absolutist system all beings, including God, would be contingent upon the intelligence inherent in the totality of necessarily existing particles. This neo-absolutist view also implied that God as a person had come into being from a prior state of impersonal existence. Such a doctrine logically describes a force prior to God as an organized individual confined in space and time by virtue of His material existence. In such a context, the question becomes if man is dependent upon a more ultimate force for his existence, then should not we worship it rather than the personal "God" derived therefrom? If we are concerned only with the "attributes" of God, then the answer would seem to be yes.

Eternal personalism, on the other hand, would necessitate a "finitist theology." In such a view, both men and Gods would exist as individual entities. Man, like God in his primal nature, could choose to become god. God, however, would be related to intelligences and conditioned by uncreatable matter, space, time and eternal laws. In other words, God would not be responsible for the ultimate constituents of the universe. Such a departure from classical Christian theology generates interesting possibilities for explaining the existence of evil as arising from human experience. Moral evil therefore could be described as the result of genuine moral freedom inherent in uncreated intelligences, whose individual inequalities are not the product of God's creative actions. Natural evil could be described as the result of

uncreated eternal laws and conditions necessary for the eternal progression of individuals, neither of which God could contravene.

Even so, the doctrine of personal eternalism raises problems for Mormon thought. If the number of intelligences is infinite, then an infinite number of intelligences will remain without the chance to progress by further organization. If, on the other hand, the number of intelligences is finite, the eternal progression of gods resulting from begetting spirits must one day cease. Either way, the dilemma remains.

Although the idea of man's necessary existence has not always characterized Mormon thought, and even when it has, the philosophical strength of the doctrine has rarely been appreciated, the doctrine is a foundation upon which a consistent and unique theology has been built. The belief that man necessarily exists provides philosophical justification for the idea that man may ultimately become like God. It emphasizes the positive aspects of human existence, rejecting the dogma of original sin, rejecting salvation by grace, and emphasizing works and personal ability to do good. It accentuates freedom of the will, explains the existence of evil and the purpose of life, and most important, it asserts that God is a personal being conditioned by, and related to, the physical universe.

NOTES

¹Charles Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church*. T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1895, pp. 221–228. A. Mehat. "Apocryse: Origen, Clement d'Alexandrie," *Vigilae Christianae* X:3/4, p. 196. Henri Crouzel and Manilo Simonetti. *Origene: Traite des Principes* (Paris, Editions du Derf: 1978), 2 vols., I:40.

²Thomas Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5:4, 1980, pp. 25–27; T. Edgar Lyon, "Doctrinal Development of the Church During the Nauvoo Sojourn," *BYU Studies* 15:4, 1975, pp. 437–39; Marvin S. Hill, "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," *BYU Studies* 9:2, 1969, pp. 262–65; Timothy Smith, "Righteousness and Hope: The Biblical Culture that Nurtured Early Mormon Faith," *Mormon History Assn., Canandaigua, New York, May 2, 1980*.

³For the nature of man, see Mosiah 3:19; Alma 41:11; 42:10–12; for the nature of God, see I Ne. 11:18,21 (1st Edition), II Ne. 31:21; Mosiah 15:2–5; Alma 11:26–35; III Ne. 11:27; Moroni 8:18. An early convert would have found very little in the Book of Mormon to challenge traditional Trinitarianism; however, the Israelite authors of the Book of Mormon did not write from a perspective of Trinitarianism and therefore did not find it necessary to explain how God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are one. This Trinitarianism may also reflect Joseph Smith's earlier understanding imposed on the text through translation. Likewise, the term "natural man" could not have had Calvinistic connotations for the Nephite writers, even though the present terminology through translation may have suggested such to the early converts.

⁴*Evening and Morning Star*, Oct. 1832, p. 77. Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* II, xxxiv.2 in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Graecae*, 161 vols. (Paris: n.p., 1857–68), Vol. VII. Tertullian, *Contra Hermogones* vii, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae*, 221 vols, (Paris: n.p., 1877–90), II:227.

⁵*Messenger and Advocate*, May, 1835, p. 113. Cf. Alexander p. 32n12.

⁶Lyon, p. 439; Alexander, p. 33n23; Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follet Discourse," *BYU Studies* 18:2, 1978, pp. 209–225. A survey of the extant letters and literature from this period failed to produce a single source commenting on the doctrine of pre-existence of man. Even so, the argument from silence is inconclusive since there was very little exegesis of the new Mormon scriptures on any subject during this period.

⁷The word "to create" was not clarified until 1842 with the Book of Abraham and again more fully in the King Follett Discourse. See Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon Cook. *The Words of Joseph Smith*, BYU Religious Studies Monograph: Provo, 1980, p. 351; the term "spirit" was not clarified until 1843 to mean pure or refined matter. See B. H. Roberts. *Documentary History of the Church* 5:392-93; the term "intelligence" was first used for entities in the Book of Abraham 3:18-22. Even here the term is equivocal.

⁸This does not mean that either Joseph Smith or his contemporaries were aware of the technical distinction between "ideal" and "real" pre-existence. The terminology was introduced by Adolph Harnack, *The History of Dogma*. New York: Dover Publishers, 1961, I:318-19, trans., Neil Buchanan, 6 vols. See also Kelly-Hammerton, *Pre-Existence, Wisdom and the Son of Man*. Cambridge: New Testament Studies Supplement: 1973, pp. 2-4.

⁹Doctrine & Covenants (1835 ed.), p. 211 (Section 93:32-34; 29 of the present edition). Several levels of analysis indicate that *ideal* pre-existence was intended in this revelation: 1) intelligence is singular; not plural as in the Nauvoo period; 2) intelligence is noted as an attribute of God's "glory," [vs. 36]; 3) intelligence is defined as "truth and light" [vs. 36] or as "the light of truth." [vs. 29], suggesting that intelligence is a manifestation of God's knowledge; 4) in every case where man is said to pre-exist (i.e., "Ye were also in the beginning with the Father," [vs. 23], "Man was in the beginning with the Father" [vs. 29]), the statement is further clarified to mean "that which is spirit, even the Spirit of Truth, and truth is knowledge," or "Intelligence," the knowledge of truth [vss. 23-24, 29].

However, it is possible that *real* pre-existence was intended even though no elucidation of the principle appeared until the Nauvoo period. For instance, several statements in this revelation are consonant with real pre-existence: "I (Christ) was in the beginning with the Father . . . Ye were also in the beginning with the Father" [vss. 21, 23]; "All truth is independent in that sphere which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also, otherwise there is no existence" [vs. 31]; "Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning" [vs. 38].

¹⁰Another statement of "ideal" pre-existence may occur in Alma 13:3.

¹¹*Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1933, Vol. 10, p. 628. See Spirit, meaning #6: "Of or pertaining to, emanating from intellect or higher faculties of the mind; intellectual."

¹²Pearl of Great Price, Moses 3:5. Manilo Simonetti, "Alcune Osservazioni sull'interpretazione Oregiana di Genesi 2,7 e 3,21" in *Aevum* 36, 1972, pp. 370-381. The notion was first introduced by Philo, *De Opificio Mundi* 46, 134; Leg. All. I, xii.31.

¹³Georg Hegel. *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1907), G. Lasson, Ed., *Sämtliche Werke, kritische Ausgabe*. Leipzig: F. Meiner, vol. 2. Cf. James Hastings, "Pre-existence," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 10:240; for the influence of Hegel's philosophy see Harold Hoffding, *A History of Modern Philosophy*. New York: Dover, 1955, trans., B. Meyer, pp. 177-180; 266-270. See also Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*. New York: Image Books, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 284-94. pp. 284-94.

¹⁴Gregory of Nyssa, "On the Making of Man," in Philip Schaff, *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956, pp. 420-21.

¹⁵Lectures on Faith #5, in D&C (1835 ed.), pp. 52-54. Cf. Joseph Smith's 1835 account of the First Vision in Milton V. Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*. SLC: Bookcraft, 1971, pp. 158-159. Even with this development, the material tri-theism of our own day was yet to be developed.

¹⁶Michael Walton, "Professor Seixas, the Hebrew Bible, and the Book of Abraham," *Sunstone* 6:1981, pp. 41-48.

¹⁷Van Hale, pp. 213-215.

¹⁸*History of the Church* (hereafter HC), B. H. Roberts, Ed. (SLC: Deseret Book Co., 1978 reprint, 7 vols., 5:393, May 16 & 17, 1843. Cf. William Clayton Journal, 17 May 1843. Church History Office (hereafter HCO).

¹⁹Ehat & Cook, p. 9; see also notes 4 and 6 p. 23. Quoting Willard Richards Pocket Companion.

²⁰*ibid.* p. 60; Quoting William Clayton's Private Book 5 January 1841. Cf. similar statements: "It is contrary to a Rashnall (rational) mind & Reason that a something could be Brought from a Nothing." p. 61; "Is it logical to say that a spirit is immortal and yet have a beginning? Because

if a spirit of man had a beginning, it will have an end, but it does not have a beginning or end. This is good logic and is illustrated by my ring. I take my ring from finger and liken it unto the mind of man—the *immortal spirit*—because there would be a beginning and an end. So it is with the mind of man.” Larson, p. 204. For Patristic statements: Tertullian, *Against Hermogenes*, XI in PL 2:231; Athenagoras, *De Resurrectione Mortuorum* X,xii; Theophilus, *Ad Autolytus* XXVII; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* II,xxxiv,2; Aristides, *Apologia* I, “When I say that ‘God is without beginning,’ this also means that everything which has a beginning will have an end.” in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson Eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Christian Literature Co., 1893), II, 105.

²¹Ehat & Cook, p. 60

²²Book of Abraham in Times and Seasons March 1842.

²³G. H. Box. *The Apocalypse of Abraham* (New York: 1919), pp. 68–69.

²⁴Stan Larson. “The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text” *BYU Studies*, 18:1978, pp. 179–192. Quotation from page 203.

²⁵Larson, p. 204.

²⁶The concept of spiritual birth was first associated with the doctrine of pre-existence by Eliza R. Snow, “O My Father” *Times and Seasons*, Oct. vi (1845), p. 1039; W. W. Phelps published a poem with a similar theme in 1854, see HC, VIII, p. 331. Cf. Linda Wilcox. “The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven” *Sunstone* 5:1980, pp. 9–15.

²⁷Joseph Lee Robinson Journal (n.p.), p. 21; typescript in BYU Special Collections.

²⁸Joseph Smith used the terms “spirit” and “intelligence” interchangeably throughout the Nauvoo era. Although Joseph Smith may have secretly taught the doctrine of a Mother in heaven, he did not bifurcate the pre-existent state of man into a period of existence as intelligences and existence as spirits after spiritual birth through a heavenly mother. All sources attributing the idea of a heavenly Mother to Joseph Smith are late and probably unreliable. See Wilford Woodruff, *Millennial Star* 56 (April), p. 229, delivered Oct. 8, 1893, Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association* (SLC: Deseret News, 1911), pp. 15–16; Joseph F. Smith, *Deseret News*, Feb. 9, 1895.

²⁹Robinson Journal, p. 21. Cf. Journal of Mosiah Hancock, “About the time I was one and twenty years of age (circa 1855), I know not whether to call it a dream or a vision . . . methought I was taken away somewhere . . . I say . . . the Beginning, God created man, male and female, created He them. . . suffice it to say, that they were created in pairs, the male and his female.” (n.p.), p. 36 of BYU Special Collections typescript.

³⁰Parley P. Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 26 vols. (hereafter JD). I:7–8.

³¹T. Edgar Lyon, *Orson Pratt: Early Mormon Leader* (Master’s Thesis: University of Chicago, 1932), pp. 102–119; Cf. Gottfried Leibniz. *The Monadology*, in *The Rationalists* (New York: Anchor Books, 1974), trans. Albert Chandler, pp. 455–71.

³²Orson Pratt, *The Seer* (Washington, D.C., 1853), p. 102

³³Pratt, p. 103

³⁴Pratt, p. 102

³⁵Letter of Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, Sept. 1, 1853; Pratt’s response to Young, Nov. 4, 1853 (Brigham Young Collection), CHD.

³⁶Orson Pratt to Brigham Young, Nov. 4, 1853, Wash. D.C., CHD.

³⁷See Samuel W. Richards, BYU Special Collections typescript, March 25, 1855—“In the PM Prest. B. Young spoke to the Meeting in a very interesting manner referring to several points touched upon in the morning by Bro. Pratt. Did not seem fully to fancy Orson’s idea about the “great Almighty God” referring so especially to his attributes.” Cf. JD 3:203.

³⁸Pratt to Young Nov. 4, 1853, see also Gary Bergera. “The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies” *Dialogue* 2:1980, pp. 7–49.

³⁹Wilford Woodruff Journal, March 4, 1860, "President Young said I corrected O Pratt to day I did not say to him that God would increase to all Eternity. But I said the moment that we say that God knows all things comprehends all things and has a fulness of all that He ever will obtain that moment Eternity seases you put bounds to Eternity & Space & matter and you make a stopping place to it." Cf. JD 1:93; 6:120; 11:286.

⁴⁰Orson Pratt, "The Great First Cause" and "Absurdities of Immaterialism" both in *Writings of an Apostle: Orson Pratt* (SLC: Mormon Heritage Pub., 1976 reprint), and the "Holy Spirit" *Millennial Star*, Oct. 15, 1850, p. 308.

⁴¹"The Holy Spirit" p. 308.

⁴²The 1860 statement in James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (SLC: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 2:214–23; The 1865 statement in *Millennial Star* XXVII (Oct. 21, 1865), pp. 658–660, quotation from p. 669.

⁴³Discourse Oct. 8. 1854, JD s:58–59; 4:216–18; 10:5.

⁴⁴De Principiis, II,ix.2; III,v.3 in PG XI.

⁴⁵Brigham Young taught that man's "intelligence came from eternity, and is as eternal, in its nature, as the elements, or as the Gods" JD 1:2–3; or that "the soul of man is eternal" JD 7:285 10:5.

⁴⁶Wilford Woodruff Journal, Feb. 17, 1856, JD 3:203.

⁴⁷Brigham Young often taught that man existed as an individual only by virtue of God's organizing power: JD 2:135; 6:31; 7:285; 4:216; 8:205.

⁴⁸Wilford Woodruff Journal Sept. 17, 1854; Joseph Lee Robinson Journal, Oct. 6, 1854; Minutes of the Council of the Twelve, April 5, 1860, Thomas Bullock scribe, Brigham Young Collection LDS Church Archives; Journal of Wilford Woodruff April 5, 1860; Record of John L. Nuttall, Feb. 7, 1877, BYU Special Collections Typescript.

⁴⁹Charles Penrose, Discourse, Nov. 16, 1884; JD 26:18–29

⁵⁰Penrose, p. 27

⁵¹Penrose, p. 27

⁵²St. George Stake High Council Minutes (LDS Church Archives), Dec. 13, 1890.

⁵³*Ibid.*; Cf. Letter of President Wilford Woodruff, May 22, 1891, from Daniel D. McArthur—St. George Stake Historical Record CHD.

⁵⁴St. George High Council Minutes, June 11, 1892; see also the Diary of J. McAllister, June 11, 1892, Diary of Charles Lowell Walker, II:740–41; under date of June 11, 1892, pp. 11–13 in BYU Special Collections Typescript.

⁵⁵Walker Journal, pp. 11–13; St. George Record June 11, 1892.

⁵⁶St. George Record, "Prest. Cannon said we worship the Father in the name of the Son. Jesus prayed to the Father when he was among the Nephites And we don't worship the intelligence in no tabernacle . . . we worship a personage and not alone his intelligence . . . Father Bunker said he believed just as Prest. Cannon does that he did not believe that we worshiped intelligence separate from the body." Walker Journal, p. 13.

⁵⁷Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs, Oct. 1903 in *BYU Studies* 4:1976, p. 206; corrected for spelling.

⁵⁸Lycurgus A. Wilson, *Outlines of Mormon Philosophy* (SLC: Deseret News, 1905), p. iv.

⁵⁹Wilson, p. 42

⁶⁰George Franklin Richards Journal, Feb. 6, 1907, pp. 128–129, also *The Improvement Era*, April 1907, pp. 401–423.

⁶¹B. H. Roberts, "The Immortality of Man" *Improvement Era*, April 1907, p. 401.

⁶²Antho Hendrick Lund Journal, August 25, 1911, p. 105

⁶³Lund Journal, Aug. 29, 1911, p. 106.

⁶⁴B. H. Roberts, *The Seventy's Course in Theology #4*, (1911), reprinted 1976 by L. H. Taylor Pub. Co., p. 11.

⁶⁵Donald Q. Cannon, "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective" *BYU Studies* 18:1978, p. 191, see notes 61 and 62.

⁶⁶Lund Journal, Dec. 7, 1914

⁶⁷Lund Journal, Dec. 11, 1914

⁶⁸John A. Widtsoe, *A Rational Theology* (SLC: Deseret Book, 1915), pp. 24–25.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 16

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 17

⁷¹*Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

⁷²B. H. Roberts, *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity* (SLC: Deseret News, 1908), p. 49

⁷³James E. Talmage, *The Vitality of Mormonism* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1919), pp. 240; 321. The doctrine of personal eternalism was prominent enough to be taught in the seminaries during 1926 without attempts to qualify the extent of man's individualism before spiritual organization. See John M. Whitaker, Lesson notes to seminary, indicate that Intelligence was interpreted as "ego, eternal, never created or made, the thinking part of man." Whitaker was one of the writers of the lessons that year. U of U Special Collections.

⁷⁴B. H. Roberts, "The Truth, The Way, The Life" (n.p., LDS Church Archives), from chapter #26, U of U Special Collections manuscript.

⁷⁵Roberts, Ch. 26.

⁷⁶Truman Madsen. "The Meaning of Christ—The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Analysis of B. H. Roberts' Unpublished Masterwork" *BYU Studies* 15:1975, p. 19, n. 1.

⁷⁷George Albert Smith, chairman of the reading committee, to Rudger Clawson, Council President, Oct. 10, 1929. Clawson Papers, CHD. The other members of the committee included Joseph Fielding Smith, Melvin Ballard, Stephen L. Richards and David O. McKay.

⁷⁸Rudger Clawson, President of Council of Twelve to Heber J. Grant, May 15, 1930. Clawson Papers, CHD.

⁷⁹Joseph Fielding Smith. *The Progress of Man* (SLC: Utah Genealogical Society, 1936), p. 11

⁸⁰Sterling M. McMurrin. *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (SLC: University of Utah Press, 1965), pp. 9–13; 96–109.

⁸¹O. Kendall White, Jr. "The Transformation of Mormon Theology" *Dialogue*, Summer 1970, pp. 9–23.

⁸²Bruce R. McConkie. *Mormon Doctrine* (SLC: Bookcraft, 1966), pp. 544–545.

⁸³McConkie, p. 387.

⁸⁴Bruce R. McConkie to Walter Horne, Oct. 2, 1974 in possession of author.

⁸⁵Madsen, p. 267, n. 19.

⁸⁶McConkie, to Horne.