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Joseph Smith the Prophet-Teacher: A Discourse

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

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Abstract: "Tomorrow will be the one hundred and second anniversary of the birth of Joseph Smith, whom most of you here present believe was a Prophet of God. I have been invited to say something about him on this occasion. It is not at all my intention to deal with the incidents of Joseph Smith's eventful life; these are familiar to you. If I could attain the full desire of my heart, I would like to set before you somewhat the value of this man as a teacher of great truths. I desire to speak of him as a Prophet-Teacher, that is, as a Prophet acting in his capacity of Teacher, a Prophet's highest and noblest office."

JOSEPH SMITH
THE
PROPHET-TEACHER

A DISCOURSE

BY

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS



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TO MY MOTHER, ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF
HER EIGHTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY, DE-
CEMBER 18, 1908.

FOR a long time, my Dear Mother, I have desired to couple remembrance of you with some of my works; and finally have chosen this Discourse upon our great Prophet-Teacher to carry with it that distinction. To all who read this Discourse, then, I desire to say that I love and honor you; and that your love for me has ever been an inspiration to my work.

JOSEPH SMITH THE PROPHET-TEACHER

A Discourse*

TOMORROW will be the one hundred and second anniversary of the birth of Joseph Smith, whom most of you here present believe was a Prophet of God. I have been invited to say something about him on this occasion. It is not at all my intention to deal with the incidents of Joseph Smith's eventful life; these are familiar to you. If I could attain the full desire of my heart, I would like to set before you somewhat the value of this man as a teacher of great truths. I desire to speak of him as a Prophet-Teacher, that is, as a Prophet acting in his capacity of Teacher, a Prophet's highest and noblest office.

As an introduction to what I desire to say, I shall read a passage from a book quite famous for its literary merit—it has reached its ninth edition; also it is famous for the

*This discourse was delivered at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, on Sunday, December 22nd, 1907, at a Memorial Service held in honor of the one hundred and second anniversary of the Prophet's birth, 23rd December 1805.

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character sketches of prominent Americans of the early decades of the nineteenth century. The book, "Figures of the Past," was written by Josiah Quincy of the famous Quincy family of Massachusetts, a graduate of Harvard, 1821; mayor of Boston from 1845 to 1849. Mr. Quincy visited Nauvoo in May, 1844, forty-three days previous to the martyrdom of the Prophet, and though his "Figures of the Past" was not published until 1882, the year of his death, yet his recollections of the Prophet and his impressions of Nauvoo were drawn from his journal, written at the time of that visit, and numerous letters written to his friends about the same period. Mr. Quincy places his pen-portrait of "Joseph Smith at Nauvoo" with similar portraits of such eminent Americans as John Adams, Daniel Webster, John Randolph, Andrew Jackson, and the French soldier and statesman, Lafayette. The passage I am going to read is the opening paragraph of the chapter on "Joseph Smith at Nauvoo."

I.

A GREAT POSSIBILITY.

IT is by no means improbable that some future text-book, for the use of generations yet unborn, will contain a question something like this: What historical

American of the nineteenth century has exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen? And it is by no means impossible that the answer to that interrogatory may be thus written: Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet. And the reply, absurd as it doubtless seems to most men now living, may be an obvious commonplace to their descendants. History deals in surprises and paradoxes quite as startling as this. The man who established a religion in this age of free debate, who was and is today accepted by hundreds of thousands as a direct emissary from the Most High—such a rare human being is not to be disposed of by pelting his memory with unsavory epithets.”

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Reading that passage a few days ago, I asked the question: Is this rather remarkable semi-prediction of Quincy's in the way of fulfillment? Tomorrow will be the one hundred and second anniversary of our Prophet's birth. It is more than one hundred years since he came to earth, and sixty-three years since he departed from it. What evidence is there before the world that would lead any serious-minded person to believe that this prediction I have read in your hearing may find fulfillment? "Certainly," men will begin to say, "enough time has elapsed to develop the character of your Prophet's work; whether he built of wood,

JOSEPH SMITH hay, stubble, or of gold or precious stones. Is his influence to be merely transient and local or did he really deal with some universal and permanent truths that must remain to influence mankind?"

II.

HISTORICAL AMERICANS.

AS introductory to these considerations, let us think about some of these historical Americans whose influence upon their countrymen is to be eclipsed, perhaps, by the "Mormon Prophet." Among our patriots and statesmen will be remembered Patrick Henry, with his doctrine of the inherent right of revolution against intolerable oppression; Jefferson, and his "Declaration of Independence" and the "Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom," the principle of which finally found its way into our national and state Constitutions; Alexander Hamilton and his political interpretation of the constitutional powers of our general government; Webster and his doctrine of the sacredness of the American Union of States—the statesman of nationalism; Monroe, with the doctrine which bears his name, politically segregating the American continents from Europe, and dedicating the western world to free institutions; Lincoln, with his doctrine of the rightfulness of

personal freedom for every man, woman and child of Adam's race—the doctrine of the universal application of the self-evident principles of the Declaration of Independence—the right of men to live, to be free, to pursue happiness—principles he invoked in behalf of the African race in the United States. Among inventors will be remembered Fulton, Whitney, Morse and Edison; among the philosophers, practical and speculative, Franklin, Emerson and John Fiske; among the poets, Longfellow, Poe, Whitman, and Lowell; among the preachers and theologians, Jonathan Edwards and his cruel orthodoxy; Wm. E. Channing and his Unitarian liberalism; Henry Ward Beecher and his successor, Lyman Abbott, with their efforts at reconciliation of Christianity and evolution.

This enumeration does not exhaust the list of historical Americans who have powerfully influenced their countrymen, but it will not be doubted that they represent the very chief of the respective groups that have so influenced their countrymen.

Thinking of the achievements of these great Americans, and weighing the influence of each upon his countrymen, do you not really think, even with Josiah Quincy on our side, it looks presumptuous in us to hold that Joseph Smith may yet exert a greater influence over his countrymen than

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III.

WHAT IS A PROPHET?

FIRST of all, a word of definition: This term “prophet”—what do you make of it? Generally, when you speak of a “prophet,” you have in mind a predictor of future events, one who foretells things that are to come to pass, and indeed that is, in part, the office of a prophet—in part what is expected of him. But really this is the very least of his duties. A prophet should be a “forth-teller” rather than a fore-teller. Primarily he must be a teacher of men, an expounder of the things of God. The inspiration of the Almighty must give him understanding, and when given he must expound it to his people, to his age. He must be a Seer that can make others see. A Teacher sent of God to instruct a people—to enlighten an age. This is the primary office of a prophet. And now I want to show you how well and faithfully our Prophet performed such duties.

To do this it is necessary that I say something about the ideas prevailing in the world at the Prophet’s advent among men—I

mean as to their religions and philosophies, the doctrines by which they were influenced. And this not only as to truth, but also as to error—and chiefly as to error, for, among other things, a prophet must correct the errors of men. It is a capital method of teaching truth—this correcting of errors.

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IV.

RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

REVELATION: At the commencement of the nineteenth century the general idea prevailed in Christendom that a great while ago a very definite revelation from God had been given; angels had visited the earth and imparted divine knowledge to men; the Spirit of the Almighty had rested upon some and had given them understanding by which they were able to declare the mind of God and the will of God. These were prophets. Some prophets there were who even talked with God “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.” So communed Moses with God (Ex. 33:11); so, too, Isaiah (Isa. 6:1-6). But while this belief as to revelation in the past everywhere prevailed, orthodox Christendom was equally certain that no revelation was being given in their day; and not

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only was no revelation then being given, but neither would there be any revelation given in future time. "The volume of revelation is completed and forever closed," was dogma in all Christendom. There would be no future visitation of angels. No more would the heavens be opened, or man stand face to face with his God, or speak to his Lord as a man speaketh to his friend. All this was ended. The canon of scripture was completed, and forever closed. That canon consisted of the Old and New Testaments; all other books were secular—this alone sacred. There was no other word of God.

IDEAS OF DEITY: In regard to deity, Christian men, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, believed that God was an incorporeal, immaterial being, without body—that is, not material, not matter; without parts; without passions. And yet, with gravest inconsistency, they held that God was of love the essence; that He loved righteousness, that He hated iniquity; that He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life! Notwithstanding this "love" and this "hate" God was without passions! He was, too, according to men's creeds, without form. Notwithstanding Moses, one of the God-inspired teachers of

men, said that "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him;" and Jesus, by a prophet of the New Testament, was declared to be the express image of God's person (Hebrews i: 2, 3). Notwithstanding this, I say, men, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, were possessed of a "morbid terror" of anthropomorphism—the ascription of human form, feeling or qualities to God—as if they could escape it and still hold belief in the Bible revelation of God! Or, for matter of that, hold to any doctrine of God taught either by religion or philosophy. At the very least, if the God-idea survive at all, God must be held to possess consciousness, both consciousness of self, and of other than self—self-consciousness, and other-consciousness; also He must be thought of as possessed of volition; and what are these but human qualities, which present God to our thought as anthropomorphic? Strip God of these attributes and He is reduced to the atheists' "force;" to blind, purposeless force, that can sustain no possible personal relationship whatsoever to men or other things in the universe. As one writer in a great magazine recently said: "If we are to know the Supreme Reality at all, it can only be through the attribution to Him of qualities analogous to, though infinitely transcending, the qualities which we

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JOSEPH SMITH recognize as highest in man, and consequently [highest] in the world as we know it.”

But I must pass by these inconsistencies of the creeds of men. I shall have no time to discuss them. Indeed, I must ask you to think with me in headlines, and to think fast. We have no time for argument. We shall barely have time to pass over the ground proposed, and must depend upon the truth of our statements being self-evident, or conceded to be accurate statements of fact.

OF THE UNIVERSE: Respecting the universe, Christendom, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, believed that it was created of God from nothing, and that no great while ago. “Calling forth from nothing” was held to be indeed the meaning of “create.” God transcended the universe; was, in fact, outside of it; was what an American philosopher (Fiske) some years afterwards called an “Absentee God.” Absent, “except for a little jog or poke here and there in the shape of a special providence.”

Down to a period almost within living memory,” says Andrew Dixon White, in his great work, “Warfare of Science with Theology,” “it was held, virtually ‘always, everywhere, and by all,’ that the universe, as

we now see it, was created literally and directly by the voice or hands of the Almighty, or by both—out of nothing—in an instant, or in six days, or in both—about four thousand years before the Christian era—and for the convenience of the dwellers upon the earth, which was at the base and foundation of the whole structure.” Such were the views of men concerning the universe during the period here considered.

OF MAN: Respecting man, it was taught that while he was created of God, his origin was purely an earthly one, his body made of the earth, a spirit breathed into him when his body was made, and so man became a living soul. All taught that he was a created thing, a creature.

MAN AND HIS SALVATION: As to man’s salvation, some of the creeds taught that God, of His own volition, had foreordained that some men and angels were doomed to everlasting destruction, and others predestined to eternal life and glory. Not “for any good or ill” that they had done or could do, but their fate was fixed by the volition of God alone. These whom He would save, He would move by irresistible grace to their salvation; those whom He had pre-determined should be damned might not escape, struggle they

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never so persistently; no prayers could save them; no act of obedience might mitigate their punishment; no hungering and thirsting after righteousness, bring them to blessedness; they must perish, and that eternally! Those who perish in ignorance of Christ—the heathen races—were damned. “The heathen in mass, with no single definite and unquestionable exception on record, are evidently strangers to God, and going down to death in an unsaved condition. The presumed possibility of being saved without a knowledge of Christ remains, after 1,800 years, a possibility illustrated by no example.” So said those who expounded this creed. Others, still, taught that infants dying in infancy without receiving Christian baptism were damned, and that everlastingly. By some, unbaptized infants were denied burial in sanctified ground. “Hell’s Half Acre” was a reality in some Christian graveyards.

O F THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SALVATION AND DAMNATION: Salvation and damnation meant, as to the former, the attainment of heaven; as to the latter, assignment to hell. The former, judging from the descriptions of it, a mysterious, indefinite state “enjoyed” somewhere “beyond the bounds of time and space * * * the saints secure abide;”

the latter, a very definite place, with very definite and very hot conditions, that had power to endure and that everlastingly, to the eternal misery of the damned. Time might come and time might go, but this torture, undiminished, went on forever. If one gained heaven, even by ever so small a margin, he entered upon a complete possession of all its unutterable joys, equally with the angels and the holiest of saints. If he missed heaven, even by ever so narrow a margin, he was doomed to everlasting torment equally with the wickedest of men and vilest of devils, and there was no deliverance for him.

These were some of the prevailing ideas, of the philosophy and the religion of men at the birth of the Prophet. A philosophy inadequate for any reasonable accounting for the universe. A religion that was derogatory to God and debasing to man—errors of both philosophy and religion that it was, I believe, the mission of our Prophet to correct. Let us follow him as he proceeds with his corrections, his setting over against every error above enumerated the truth received of God.

THE PROPHET'S CORRECTION OF
SECTARIAN ERRORS.

THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION: Against the sectarian dogma of the cessation of revelation, Joseph Smith proclaimed the reopening of the heavens. Against the doctrine that angels would no more visit the earth, he asserted the visitation of angels to him, revealing the existence of the Book of Mormon, a new volume of Scripture. Other angels brought to the Prophet the keys of authority and power held by them in former dispensations. So came John the Baptist with the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood; Peter, James and John, with the keys of the Melchisedek Priesthood; Moses, with the keys of the gathering of Israel, and so following. Against the doctrine of a closed volume of Scripture, Joseph Smith asserted the existence of, and the truth of the American volume of Scripture, the Book of Mormon. Against this whole narrow, bigoted idea of revelation held by the Christian world, he proclaimed a larger view. Instead of holding that a few prophets among the Hebrews had been visited of God and received divine inspiration he represented God as saying:

“Thou fool, that shall say, A Bible, a Bible,

we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible! Have ye obtained a Bible, save it were by the Jews? Know ye not that there are more nations than one; know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men; yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? For I command all men, both in the east and in the west * * * and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them. * * * Behold, I will speak unto the Jews, and they shall write it; and I will also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I will also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I will also speak unto all nations of the earth, and they shall write it.”

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Joseph Smith also represents one of the Nephite prophets as saying:

“Behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word; yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true.”

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This doctrine unites in one splendid brotherhood all the Seekers after God, all those who received inspiration from the Most High and were sent forth from the Divine Presence to instruct their fellow men. Joseph Smith, I say, unites their hands in a splendid brotherhood of the God-inspired men of this world. Not that all the prophets among the various races of men were equally inspired; not that all came with a fulness of truth; not that all had the gospel of Jesus Christ. But if they brought not with their message the effulgent brightness of an all-glorious day, they brought something of twilight which dispelled some of the murkiness of the night in which the men of their respective races had walked; and those who have groped in the density of darkness know how grateful is the twilight, how much better it is than darkness. How noble is this view of God's hand-dealings with the children of men in respect of revelation, as compared with that narrow, bigoted view prevailing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which held that the Hebrew Scriptures contained all the word of God delivered to the inhabitants of the earth!

THE BEING AND KIND OF BEING
GOD IS: Against the dogma that
God was an incorporeal, immaterial,
passionless being, the Prophet announced

the splendid doctrine of anthropomorphism—God in the human form, and possessed of human qualities, but sanctified and perfected. In the first great revelation which opened this last dispensation our Prophet beheld Father and Son as separate persons, distinct from each other; persons in the form of men, but more glorious and more splendid, of course, than words could describe them to be. All through the revelations received, and all through his discourses, the Prophet reaffirms the old doctrine of the Scriptures, the doctrine of all the prophets, asserting that man indeed was created in the image of God, and that God possessed human qualities, consciousness, will, love, mercy, justice; together with power and glory—in a word, a Man “exalted and perfected.”

CREATION—THE LAW OF SUBSTANCE: In opposition to the doctrine that God had created the universe of nothing, the Prophet asserted the doctrine of the eternity of substance and energy and law, and their infinite extension throughout all space; that creation is but the wisely wrought changes made in the modes of existences, which are themselves—in their essence—eternal, the changes constantly tending to higher developments, from good to better, or else ministering to that end.

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OF MAN'S ORIGIN: Against the doctrine which ascribed a merely earthly origin for man, body and spirit; that taught that the intelligent entity in man—the mind—was a created thing—against this, I say, our Prophet taught that “Intelligence is not created or made, neither, indeed, can be.” He taught that the intelligent entity in man, which men call “spirit” and sometimes “soul,” is a self-existing entity, uncreated and eternal as God is, placed in the way by Higher Intelligences,—and guided by their love and counsels,—of increasing his own intelligence and power and glory and joy. Such he represented man to be, and once more crowned him with the dignity belonging to his Divine and eternal nature.

ELECTION AND REPROBATION: In regard to that monstrous doctrine that God, by the exercise of His sovereign will, had predestined some men and angels unto everlasting life, while others He ordained to everlasting death; and that, not because of the good or the evil they had done or might do, but because he had so willed it by his sovereign will; that “the number of such men and angels thus predestined are so peculiarly and unchangeably known, and their number so certain and definite that

it can not be either increased or diminished” —against this monstrous view of the doctrine of salvation for the race of men, our Prophet declared salvation to be free, and every soul of man capable of participating therein, if happily he should seek salvation; and that man could be assured of the help and grace of God to aid him in the attainment of salvation. Commenting on a passage of Scripture supposed to teach the sectarian doctrine of Election and Reprobation, the Prophet said: “Unconditional election of individuals to eternal life was not taught by the Apostles. God did elect, or predestinate, that all those who would be saved should be saved in Christ Jesus, and through obedience to the Gospel”—other than this there was no predestination or election relating to the salvation of individuals.

On the subject of the fate of the unstructed heathen, as also upon the matter of children dying in infancy, or before arriving at the years of accountability, the doctrine of Joseph Smith held that where no law is given men will be judged without law, but will stand within the circle of the mercy of God, and there is hope, nay, assurance, of ultimate salvation for the heathen. “The heathen nations shall be redeemed, and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection; and it

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shall be tolerable for them,” are the words of the Lord through the Prophet.

And as for infants dying in infancy, or before arriving at years of accountability, the Prophet taught, the mercy of God claims them wholly. They are redeemed from the consequences of Adam’s transgression by the atonement of Christ, and being without sin themselves, the law against sin has no claim upon them, and they are saved to the uttermost without baptism or anything else whatsoever, by the pure mercy and justice of God. “Little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world,” is a doctrine of the Prophet’s.

THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT: Against the dogma of the attainment of heaven or the assignment to hell, involving, as it did, the equality of the glory in the one, and equal severity of punishment in the other, our Prophet reasserted the justice of God in providing a graded state of existence for men in the future life, grades that correspond to the state of mental, moral and spiritual development of every soul of man.

Upon this subject Joseph Smith taught that there are many kingdoms of the Father in which men may live, each in a sphere suitable to his nature, disposition and the degree

of his development: moderns would say, "Suitable to the state of his evolution." He taught that as there is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars, so in future men will exist in varying degrees of glory; that as the stars of heaven differ in infinite degrees of brightness, so also will men in the future exist in places and states of infinite variety, corresponding to the infinite variations of their intelligence, knowledge, tastes, acquirements, inclinations, and aspirations. In other words, environment will correspond to nature, with always the possibility present of improving both the environment and the nature, until a fulness of joy is attained by each intelligent entity—by each man.

Thus Joseph Smith promulgated a system of positive doctrine respecting the future of man that is at once in harmony with the relative claims of justice and mercy; with human reason and divine law. He made known the fact that

"Eternal punishment is God's punishment."
"Endless punishment is God's punishment."

That is to say, the punishment for sin—which is only another way of saying the "penalty" for wrong-doing—takes the title of Him in whose name it is administered, that is, it is "God's" punishment, or "Eternal's" punishment, "Endless' punishment."

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The punishment takes on it the name of Him in whose authority it is administered. Moreover, penalty will always follow violation of the law, in eternity as in what we call time. So long as law exists, penalties must also exist. They are the necessary concomitants of law, without which laws are mere nullities. But because punishments, so-called, take on the name of Him in whose authority they are administered, and because law is necessarily paralleled by penalty—therefore punishment will always exist for offenders against law; in other words is endless—it does not follow that each transgressor of the law will suffer its penalties eternally. Such a conception is revolting to reason and derogatory to the justice and mercy of God. While one must needs believe that penalty follows violation of law, the violator only partakes of that penalty to the extent that is necessary to vindicate the law and correct the transgressor's own disposition: whereupon mercy has her claims, that may not be denied: and the one time violator of law, instructed by his experience in suffering, goes forth to walk, let us hope, in harmony with law, and hence in peace.

Thus, all down the line of religious error, as well as in the things here pointed out, Joseph Smith asserted the truth of God, and maintained it before the world. Had he done no more than this, if this had been the

sole achievement in the world's realm of thought by our Prophet—he would stand in fair way of being regarded as the historical American who had exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen. But instead of this being the end of his achievements it is merely the commencement of his life's work; a mere clearing of the ground for the new temple of religion and philosophy to be erected; the dismissal of the absurdities of old systems to make way for the incoming of the new system of thought which shall be in harmony with the new knowledge of a new and glorious age—the incoming millennium.

I wonder if I may venture here to draw in outline the suggestion of that system? By your leave, then: In the beginning it is necessary to say to you that I shall use all ideas, doctrines, philosophies, science principles, interpretations that I find brought to the knowledge of the world through Joseph Smith, directly or indirectly. For while doctrines here used are found in the Book of Mormon and properly should be referred to the prophets among ancient American peoples for their origin, still the world today owe their knowledge of these things to the translation of the Book of Mormon by Joseph Smith. So also in relation to the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham. So

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also as to the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants; such philosophy and religious principles as are there found are given of God, but Joseph Smith received and published them, and for the purposes of what is here to be set forth shall stand as his doctrines and philosophy, as well also as those utterances that make up the subject-matter of his discourses.

VI.

THE PROPHET'S PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES.

THE PROPHET'S DEFINITION OF TRUTH: Undoubtedly the quest of philosophy is Truth. And again, undoubtedly, Philosophy would be greatly helped in its search for Truth if it had but a clear conception of what it was trying to find; hence the importance of a clear and accurate definition of Truth. It is at this point, however, that the greatest difficulty arises for the human intellect. It is quite generally conceded that up to the early decades of the nineteenth century no satisfactory definition of Truth had been found. When Jesus stood bound before Pilate's judgment seat, and testified that He was born to bear witness of the Truth, Pilate—whether in mockery or in earnest curiosity we may not now know—asked the question:

“What is truth?” But the Divine Man made no answer. Most commentators say that, without waiting for an answer the Roman procurator departed from the judgment hall to speak to the Jews clamoring on the outside; and all regret the opportunity that was there lost of receiving a divine answer to the question. One set of commentators, referring to Pilate’s question, say to him: “Thou stirrest the question of questions, which the thoughtful of every age have asked, but never man yet answered.”

A secular writer presents the same incident as follows: “‘What is truth?’ was the passionate demand of a Roman procurator, on one of the most momentous occasions in history. And the Divine Person who stood before him, to whom the interrogation was addressed, made no reply—unless, indeed, silence contained the reply. Often and vainly had that demand been made before—often and vainly has it been made since. No one has yet given a satisfactory answer.”

Then, by way of historical illustration of this assertion, our author remarks the following:

“When, at the dawn of science in Greece, the ancient religion was disappearing like a mist at sunrise, the pious and thoughtful men of that country were thrown into a condition of intellectual despair. Anaxagoras plaintively exclaims, ‘Nothing can be

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known, nothing can be learned, nothing can be certain, sense is limited, intellect is weak, life is short.' Xenophanes tells us that it is impossible for us to be certain even when we utter the Truth. Parmenides declares that the very constitution of man prevents him from ascertaining absolute Truth. Empedocles affirms that all philosophical and religious systems must be unreliable, because we have no criterion by which to test them. Democritus asserts that even things that are true cannot impart certainty to us; that the final result of human inquiry is the discovery that man is incapable of absolute knowledge; that, even if the truth be in his possession, he cannot be certain of it. Pyrrho bids us reflect on the necessity of suspending our judgment of things, since we have no criterion of truth; so deep a distrust did he impart to his followers that they were in the habit of saying, 'We assert nothing; not even that we assert nothing.' Epicurus taught his disciples that truth can never be determined by reason. Arcesilaus, denying both intellectual and sensuous knowledge, publicly avowed that he knew nothing, not even his own ignorance! The general conclusion to which Greek philosophy came was this: that, in view of the contradiction of the evidence of the senses, we cannot distinguish the true from the false; and such is the imperfection of reason, that we cannot

affirm the correctness of any philosophical deduction.”

I make these quotations to show that no satisfactory definition of Truth, either in ancient or modern times, either in religion or philosophy, has been given, and also to call attention to the fact that if Joseph Smith has given a definition of Truth that appeals with irresistible force to the understanding of men, it must be a strongly original utterance; a revelation of the utmost importance. Such a definition, I believe, he has given. In 1833 he said:

“Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.”

This I hold to be the completest definition of Truth found in human literature. It deals with relative truth, absolute truth, and truth unfolding or becoming.

It may be objected that this definition is defective in that it appears to make Truth depend upon knowledge. “Truth,” says the definition, “is knowledge of things as they are,” etc. This part of the definition deals with relative Truth merely. “Truth as it appears to us,” says S. Baring-Gould, “can only be relative, because we are relative creatures, have only a relative perception and judgment. We appreciate that which is true to ourselves, not that which is universally true.”

In other words, and using the language of

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Herbert Spencer at this point: "Debarred as we are from everything beyond the relative, Truth, raised to its highest form, can be for us nothing more than perfect agreement throughout the whole range of our experience, between those representations of things which we distinguish as ideal and those presentations of things which we distinguish as real." That is to say, to each individual, "knowledge of things as they are and as they were" will be to him the Truth, and the fullness thereof, though not necessarily all the Truth there is. There is Truth, however, which does not depend upon knowledge; existences beyond and independent of any human knowledge, at least.

To illustrate: America existed, though all Europe was without knowledge of it for ages; until, in fact, it was discovered by Columbus. The power of steam always existed, but men did not know it until modern times. So, also, with the mysterious force called electricity, it always existed, but not until recent years did man know it as a force that could be utilized; and so as to many other forces and truths in God's universe that are now existing, and have always existed, but man, as yet, has no knowledge of them. The storehouse of Truth is not yet exhausted by man's discoveries. There are more Truths in heaven and earth than are yet dreamed of in human philosophies.

And yet it may be that running parallel with those existences, substances and relations unknown to man, there exist intelligences that cognize such existences and relations. To recur to one item in the illustrations above: America existed though all Europe was without knowledge of it until discovered by Columbus; but America had inhabitants, intelligences of her own that knew of the existence of these Western continents. And so it may be if one could be transported to Mars; while there is much that we do not know about Mars—has it an atmosphere and oceans? Has it great continents and mountain ranges? Is it inhabited? If so, what is the status of its civilization? These all may be existences, realities on Mars, but we do not know of them, but there may be intelligent inhabitants on Mars who know all these things and a thousand more that are unknown to us, yet known to intelligences inhabiting Mars. And so as to the most distant planets and planet-systems conceivable. Everywhere that things exist, they may be paralleled by Intelligences that cognize them. Then, again, there are varying degrees of Intelligences. Where two Intelligences exist and one is more intelligent than another, it leads to the thought that there may be a third more intelligent than the first two; thence to a fourth or fifth more intelligent still; thence onward, rising

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one above another, in superiority of intelligence until you stand in the presence of an infinity of Intelligences, or reach One more intelligent than them all! One who, directly or indirectly, in all councils presides; who guides all movements; who directs all undertakings; who controls all worlds and world-systems; who loves all; who comprehends all things, even the sum of existences—the Truth! And so in the last analysis of the matter, wheresoever there are existences to be known, even though they stretch to infinity, there are also Intelligences that parallel such existences to cognize them, control them, dominate them, and through them work out Their will.

The phrase above—“the sum of existence:” we have more to do with that. The phrase is used by a most faithful and earnest Christian man, the late John Jacques. Instructed by the Prophet Joseph Smith, he sang in his hymn on Truth, the following:

Then say, what is Truth? 'Tis the last and
the first,

For the limits of time it steps o'er;
Though the heavens depart and the earth's
fountains burst,

Truth, the sum of existence, will weather the
worst,

Eternal, unchanged, evermore.

Surely that which is, that which has been,
and that which is to come, must be the sum

of existence, or absolute Truth; and all that is, or has been, or shall be, has been, is and shall be known by the everywhere existing Intelligences, who, with the rest of their knowledge, know themselves; who possess self-consciousness, as well as other-consciousness, that is, consciousness of other things than themselves. Truth, indeed, from this view point, is knowledge of that which is, including self-knowledge of the knower. It may be said that the absolute Truth, even as here set forth, is beyond the grasp of the finite mind. I shall concede the claim; but because finite mind cannot comprehend the sum of existence, or absolute Truth, it does not follow that the definition we are discussing is at fault, or that it can be displaced by one meaning more or less. Reflection upon the definition here presented will develop the fact that it contains a self-evident proposition of the same nature as the statement, "duration is eternal"—without beginning, without end. Or, "space is limitless"—it has no point beyond which it may not be conceived to extend, and beyond which it does not extend. It is vain to say that the finite mind cannot comprehend the realities presented by these statements. The thing is greater than any symbol we can fashion of it by word or otherwise; but we cannot conceive the opposite of these statements, i. e., that space

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has boundaries; that duration has limits; that absolute Truth is less than the sum of existence. In the definition herein set forth you have all that is; and if in any definition of Truth there is failure to include the sum of existences by so much would the definition be defective and fail of its aim to define Truth. As to relative Truth—every individual man's Truth—that is each individual man's knowledge of so much of the sum of existences as he can make his own, as already pointed out.

One other reflection on this definition. Note the words in it: "Knowledge of things * * * as they are to come." This presents a view of Truth seldom if ever met with. It gives the idea of movement. Truth is not a stagnant pool, but a living fountain; not a Dead Sea without tides or currents; on the contrary it is an ocean, immeasurably great, vast, co-extensive with the Universe—it is the Universe—bright-heaving, boundless, endless and sublime! Moving in majestic currents, uplifted by tides in ceaseless ebb and flow; variant but orderly; taking on new forms from ever-changing combinations; new adjustments; new relations—multiplying itself in ten thousand times ten thousand ways; ever reflecting the intelligence of the Infinite; and declaring alike in its whispers and in its thunders, the hived wisdom of the ages—of God!

AS TO THINGS—EXISTENCES: We are next to consider the universe in which men, angels, archangels and Gods—Intelligences all—live.

“There are many kingdoms * * * and there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in the which there is no space.”

This was said by Joseph Smith in 1832. The context of the passage makes it clear that “kingdoms” here are not groups of men or nations over which a monarch reigns; but substance, matter, worlds and systems of worlds, under the dominion of law, and Intelligences. It is the doctrine of the eternal and everywhere existence of matter and space. It is a description of the universe as far as it is describable. But let us think of the passage a moment; for it requires thought to rightly apprehend it.

This “space”—what is meant by it? I ask you what is between the two walls of this hall, and you would rightly answer space, extension. But what is on the outside of each wall—space; neither wall is the end of space, then. Let us look higher. What is between us and the sun? Space—extension. How much of it? Our astronomers say 92,000,000 miles. What is on the other side of the sun in a direct line from us? Space. How much, 92,000,000 miles? Yes, and if 92,000,000 miles were multiplied by 92,000,-

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000 the product would not indicate all the space in a direct line from us on the opposite side of the sun. Beyond the point so obtained space would still extend. But one wearies of these units of measure; take a ray of light. In the single batting of a bird's wing light will pass eight times round the earth, that is it will pass over a distance of 198,000 miles! There are fixed stars—suns—so distant from us, the astronomers say, that it requires hundreds of thousands and even millions of years for a ray of light to reach us from those distant suns! Take one of those distant suns and think upon it in respect of space, just as we did a moment ago in regard to what is between our earth and the sun and beyond the sun, in a direct line from us, and you get the same results. There is no means by which the limitless may be measured. Whatever the length of your measuring wand it is still inadequate. By no measurement, by no conception, may one reach the “outside curtains” beyond which space does not extend. And so as to time, duration. What was before today? Yesterday. And what will be after today? Tomorrow. Take a century, or, better yet, a millennium, a period of 1,000 years—why not take 1,000,000 years as a period with which to measure duration? It will answer just as well as our “day” of a moment ago. What preceded our present period of 1,000,-

000 years? A previous 1,000,000 of such years. And what will follow the present period of 1,000,000 years? Another such period. So you may continue, make your period of measurement what length of years or centuries or millenniums you please, the result will always be the same. It is again the attempt to measure the limitless, to encompass that which is infinite. The sum of all our thought on this head is well stated by Ernest Haeckel in one of his latest works, the very last but one, I believe, the publication of which falls within the present decade:

a. "The extent of the universe is infinite and unbounded; it is empty in no part, but everywhere filled with substance.

b. "The duration of the world is equally infinite and unbounded; it has no beginning and no end; it is eternity."

Such may be said to be the settled and universal conviction of science now; but it was far from such conviction in 1832 when Joseph Smith said the same in the passage—"There are many kingdoms; * * * and there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in the which there is no space."

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THE REIGN OF LAW: “There are many kingdoms * * * and to every kingdom is given a law; and to every law there are certain bounds also, and conditions. All beings who abide not in those conditions (i. e., abide within the law) are not justified.”

This was said in 1832. The passage proclaims the reign of law throughout this infinite universe—through all space, through all time; in all kingdoms; but implies the possibility of departure from law. But “to every law there are certain bounds also and conditions!” A bold conception this; especially three-quarters of a century ago; yet it is approved by man’s experience. The power of ocean currents and the winds to carry with them objects in the direction of their movement is overcome by another force or law—the power of steam; the force of gravitation, by the levitating power of gas; the natural tendency of water to seek its level, by the levitating power of heat and the absorbing power of the atmosphere, are hurriedly chosen examples. But this same idea of law itself having metes and bounds, or “law itself being subject to law,” Henry Drummond, one of the recognized great thinkers of the nineteenth century, more than half a century after our Prophet, declared to be “One of the most striking generalizations of recent science.” And John

Fiske said, "In order to be always sure that we are generalizing correctly, we must make the generalizing process itself a subject of generalization." Which is but a recognition of Drummond's idea that "laws have their law;" and Joseph Smith's "To every law there are certain bounds also and conditions." Already I have noted in the passage the implied possibility of the infraction of law; and the idea of law itself implies the possibility of disorder, which must result from an infraction, that is, a departure from, or violation of, law. But our Prophet said: "That which is governed by law is also preserved by law, and perfected and sanctified by the same. That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment." From all which one is to conclude that evil is subject to law as well as good, that is, it cannot remain evil and yet produce the effects of good. Our Prophet teaches, then, that through all eternity the infinite universe has been, and is, and will be, subject to law; but that "to every law there are certain bounds also and conditions."

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CHANGE AND ITS TENDENCY:
As to movement and change in this infinite universe, our Prophet represents God as saying:

“Worlds without number have I created.
* * * Behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power, and there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they to man. * * * The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; * * * and as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come, and there is no end to my works, neither to my words.”

This passage implies constant movement in this infinite universe. The statement, “As one earth shall pass away and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come,” corresponds somewhat to the modern scientist’s notion of “evolution and devolution.” Also with his statement that “Substance is everywhere and always in uninterrupted movement and transformation; nowhere is there perfect repose and rigidity; yet the infinite quantity of matter and of eternally changing force remains constant.” And now I must ask you to accept a somewhat hurriedly stated conclusion as to the effect of these changes going on in the universe, gathered, indeed, from the teaching of our Prophet, but without specific quota-

tion, namely, that the tendency of this movement in the universe, the organization and then the disintegration of worlds and world-systems is in the direction of the development of, and for the increase of the power and glory of truly immortal Intelligences. This conclusion is required by the philosophy of Joseph Smith.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOOD AND EVIL: Respecting Good and Evil, our Prophet taught: "There must needs be an opposition in all things. If it were not so, righteousness could not be brought to pass; nor wickedness, nor holiness, nor misery; neither good nor bad, therefore, all things must needs be [in the absence of these opposite existences] a compound in one."

It will require but little reflection to establish the truth of this doctrine. Good implies its opposite, evil. Law, which carries with it the idea of order, implies disorder, and takes measures against it. We become conscious of the truth of the doctrine here announced at every turn. In the astronomic order it is seen in the centripetal and centrifugal forces—the holding together and the flying apart forces. In chemistry it is manifest in the composing and decomposing forces; in positive and negative electricity. It is seen in light and darkness;

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heat, cold; movement, repose; joy, sorrow; pleasure, pain; and so following. Our Prophet's teaching on this line runs to the extent that existence itself is made to depend upon it, this antinomy of things. Listen:

“And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there is no righteousness there is no happiness. And if there is no righteousness nor happiness, there is no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not, there is no God. And if there is no God, we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things; neither to act, nor to be acted upon.”

Have you ever thought what a dreadful world this would be without this duality—the opposite existences here contended for? Imagine all things in the world to be white! No contrasts in coloring! Universal insanity must result. The “dread of sinking into naught” is matched by the dread of having things resolved into a “compound of one.” The absence of this necessary “opposition in all things” is well put, by a very recent philosophical writer, in these terms:

“Evil exists in the balance of natural forces. * * * It is also the background of good, the incentive to good, and the trial

of good, without which good could not be. As the virtue of courage could not exist without the evil of danger, and as the virtue of sympathy could not exist without the evil of suffering, so no other virtue could exist without its corresponding evil. In a world without evil—if such a world be really conceivable, all men would have perfect health, perfect intelligence, and perfect morals. No one could gain or impart information, each one's cup of knowledge being full. The temperature would stand forever at 70 degrees, both heat and cold [in excess] being evil. There could be no progress, since progress is the overcoming of evil. A world without evil would be as toil without exertion, as light without darkness, as a battle with no antagonist. It would be a world without meaning."

The German philosopher Kant put the same thought in beautiful form when he said, in substance: The dove, as she speeds her way through the air, may marvel at the resistance to her flight by the atmosphere, but we know that but for that resistance she could not fly at all. So far Kant. Applied, the conclusion would be: As the resistance of the air to the flight of the dove, so is evil to the progress of Intelligences.

[In the December number, 1908, of the "Cosmopolitan Magazine," I find the following reflections, by Mr. Ambrose Bierce,

JOSEPH SMITH on the point here discussed; and while not accepting, without modification, every thought expressed, I consider the passage too pertinent, and too rich to be denied admittance into these pages:

“Let us for a moment suppose this country’s reformers to have achieved their amiable purpose—their purposes, rather, for these are as the leaves of the forest, and no two alike. We have, then, a country in which are no poverty, no contention, no tyranny nor oppression, no peril to life or limb, no disease—and so forth. How delightful! What a good and happy people! Alas, no! With poverty have vanished benevolence, providence, and the foresight which, born of the fear of individual want, stands guard at a thousand gates to defend the general good. The charitable impulse is dead in every breast, and gratitude, atrophied by disuse, has no longer a place among human sentiments and emotions. With no more fighting among ourselves we have lost the power of resentment and resistance: a car-load of Mexicans or a shipful of Japanese can invade our fool’s paradise and enslave us, as the Spaniards overran Peru and the British subdued India. (Hailers of “the dawn of the new era” will, I trust, provide that it dawns everywhere at once or here last of all.) Having no oppression to resist and no perils to apprehend, we no longer need the courage to defy, nor the

fortitude to endure. Heroism is a failing memory and magnanimity a dream of the past; for not only are the virtues known by contrast with the vices, they spring from the same seed, grow in the same soil, ripen in the same sunshine, and perish in the same frost. A fine race of mollycoddles we should be without our sins and sufferings! In a world without evils there would be one supreme evil—existence. We need not fear any such condition. Progress is infected with the germs of reversion; on the grave of the civilization of today will squat the barbarian of tomorrow, “with a glory in his bosom” that will transfigure him the day after. The alternation is one that we can neither hasten nor retard, for our success baffles us. If, for example, we could abolish war, disease, and famine, the race would multiply to the point of “standing room only”—a condition prophesying war, disease, and famine. Wherefore the wisest prayer is this, “O Lord, make thy servant strong to fight and impotent to prevail.”]

“Moral evil,” then, is not a created thing. It is one of the eternal existences, just as duration is and space. It is as old as law—old as Truth, old as this eternal universe. Intelligences must adjust themselves to these eternal existences; this, the measure of their duty.

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THE INTELLIGENT ENTITY: Of man's spirit, called often by other names—"mind," "intelligence," "ego," "self;" but by whatever name it is called, and all nice distinctions set aside, here I mean that conscious, self-determining entity, which thinks, reasons, wills, loves, aspires—I mean the real man. Let us in our discourse call him spirit. Of man, then, thus understood, our Prophet taught:

"The soul—the mind of man—the immortal spirit—where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; but it is not so; the very idea lessens man in my estimation. I do not believe the doctrine. I know better. * * * We say that God himself is a self-existent Being. Who told you so? It is 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? * * * Is it logical to say that the intelligence of spirits is immortal, and yet that it had a beginning? The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. * * * There never was a time when there were not spirits; for they are co-eternal with our Father in heaven. * * * The spirit of man is not a created being; it existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity."

Man, then, in the Prophet's philosophy, is not a created, but a self-existent entity, one of the eternal things; not created, really uncreatable, as also indestructible. Not of earth origin, but existing in heavens without number, brother to all Intelligences—brother to the Christ with the rest. "I was in the beginning with the Father," our Prophet represents the Christ as saying—"I was in the beginning with the Father. * * * Ye [the brethren present when the revelation was given] were also in the beginning with the Father, that which is spirit. * * * Man [the race] was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence was not created or made, neither indeed can be."

But while these spirits or intelligent entities may be equal as to their eternity, they differ in the degree of intelligence—so our Prophet teaches: Where two things exist, one higher than another, there may be another thing higher yet. Where two things exist, one superior to another, there may be another still superior, and so on. So where two spirits exist, one being more intelligent than the other, there may be another more intelligent than the first. Yet, notwithstanding this difference in degree of intelligence, they are equal as to their eternity. "They existed before," said our Prophet, "they shall have no end; they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal."

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It is this difference in Intelligences that leads to order in this universe of ours. The more advanced Intelligences governing, controlling, devising, organizing, forming societies, making governments—all which shall tend to increase the glory and power and joy of Intelligences; to this end bringing into existence what we call worlds, world-systems, guiding them through immense cycles of time, and through processes that lead from chaos to cosmos, from teletial to celestial, and when attaining a point beyond which they may not be exalted in their present forms, breaking those forms, disintegrating them, throwing them back—these baser material things, not Intelligences—back to chaos, to be brought forth again to reach a grander cosmos—worlds without number have thus passed away, by the word of God's power, and many now stand, innumerable unto man; and as one earth and its heavens shall pass away, so shall another come, and there is no end to these works, this evolution and this devolution. And so the eternal drama proceeds. Intelligences meanwhile standing unhurt amidst this organization and disorganization of worlds; these integrating and disintegrating elements, this movement from lower to higher forms, from little to greater excellences; yet this without attaining to "highest" or "perfect," because advancing in the infinite,

which knows no ultimates. Meanwhile Intelligences, amid these changes, under the law of eternal progress, are ever-increasing in power, glory, might, dominion, love, benevolence, charity, justice, and all else that can make for the increase of their power and glory. In which strivings and achievements eternal evil is present; makes necessary and possible, in fact, the very strivings and achievements; and is the "foil on which good produces itself, and becomes known."

THE RELATIONSHIP OF INTELLIGENCES: It is seen that our Prophet taught the eternity of Intelligences; and that they are not only not created, but uncreatable; that though they differ in degree of intelligence, of knowledge, of love, hence differ also in power, in influence, in glory—in all that comes from soul power. The presiding Intelligence to that order of things and beings to which we belong, is represented as standing among the Intelligences destined to our earth, "and among these there were many of the noble and great ones." And the Presiding Intelligence said: "These I will make my Rulers; for He stood among those that were spirits, and He saw that they were good." "The noble and great ones" are made Rulers; and doubtless the principle here operating in respect of those Intelligences destined to our

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earth, operates in all worlds and world systems. Some of the “Noble and Great Ones” stand at the head of worlds and groups of worlds, forming Grand Presidencies, in order and gradation based upon their power and appointment. All which is dependent upon their intelligence, their character, their nobility and greatness—measured by their capacity to serve. Each one of such “Rulers”—and each Intelligence, in fact—independent in the sphere in which he is appointed to act, yet acting in harmony, through attainment of the knowledge of Truth, with all other exalted and sanctified souls—these are Gods, or the Rulers in this Universe. These make up David’s “congregation of the Mighty,” in which God, “More intelligent than them all,” standeth and judgeth “among the Gods.” (Psalms 82: 1.) And to these, in their several stations, other Intelligences owe loyalty, submission—call it worship if you like; at any rate it must be unshaken loyalty, in order to attain the ends proposed in all “plans of salvation,” “gospels,” “societies,” “kingdoms of God,” and the like, in which “plans,” “gospels” and the rest, each spirit agreed and covenanted to accept, as also to obey and honor those appointed to direct and bring to pass that which was ordained in the councils of Divine Intelligences. “At the first organization in heaven,” said the

Prophet, speaking with reference to matters THE
pertaining to our earth, and the probation PROPHECT-
of spirits upon it in earth-life—"at the first TEACHER
organization in heaven we were all present,
and saw the Savior chosen and appointed,
and the plan of salvation made, and we
sanctioned it." This the meaning of "man
[the race] was also in the beginning with
God." And as to the "Rulers," "Presiden-
cies"—they are not 'Rulers' in the worldly
sense of those words. "Government" here,
"office" in the "kingdom of God," means op-
portunity for service, not of mastery. "Ye
know that the princes of the Gentiles exer-
cise dominion over them, and they that are
great exercise authority upon them. But
it shall not be so among you. But who-
soever would be great among you, let him
be your minister; and whosoever will be
chief among you, let him be your servant;
even as the Son of Man came not to be min-
istered unto, but to minister, and to give
His life a ransom for many." So Joseph
Smith: "The powers of heaven can only be
controlled upon the principles of righteous-
ness. When men undertake to cover their
sins or to gratify their pride or vain ambition
or exercise control or dominion or compul-
sion upon the souls of the children of men in
any degree of unrighteousness, the heavens
withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord
is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, amen

JOSEPH SMITH to the authority of that man. No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul, without hypocrisy, and without guile.”

This, the principle of heavenly rule.

MAN'S FREEDOM: Through all that is here set forth as Joseph Smith's doctrines, it will be seen that the free moral agency of man is regarded as a reality. First, the recognition of man, as a spirit, being a self-existent entity—not a created thing; “man [i. e., all men, the race] was in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.” Then second, “All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all Intelligence also, otherwise there is no existence. Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man, because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light. And every man, whose spirit receiveth not the light, is under condemnation, for man is spirit.”

The fact of free moral agency runs through

all the Prophet's revelations in similar spirit. Indeed, in one scripture he represents the chief sin of Lucifer as being an attempt to "destroy the agency of man;" and for which he was driven forth from heaven. The effect of these two doctrines, the recognition of the spirit of man as an eternal being, and his being a free moral agent, is tremendous in accounting for things. Elsewhere, contrasting this view of things with some modern Christian views, I have said: As matters now stand, the usually accepted Christian doctrine on the matter of man's origin is that God of His free-will created men. That they are as He would have them, since in His act of creation He could have had them different if He had so minded. Then why should He—being infinitely wise and infinitely powerful, and infinitely good—for so the creeds represent Him—why should He create by mere act of volition, beings such as men are, not only capable of, but prone to, moral Evil? Which, in the last analysis of things, in spite of all special pleadings to the contrary, leaves responsibility for moral Evil with God? God's creative acts culminating thus, the next pertinent questions are: Then what of the decreed purpose of God to punish moral Evil? And what of the much-vaunted justice of God in that punishment? Wherein lies the just responsibility of man if he was so cre-

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ated as to love Evil and to follow it?" It is revolting to reason, as it is shocking to piety, to think that God, of His own free will, created some men, not only inclined to wickedness, but desperately so inclined; while others He, of His own volition, created with dispositions naturally inclined toward goodness. In like manner stands it with man in relation to his inclination to faith, and to unbelief; and yet, under the orthodox belief all are included under one law for judgment!

On the other hand, under the conception of the existence of independent, uncreated, self-existent Intelligences, who by the inherent nature of them are of various degrees of intelligence, doubtless differing from each other in many ways, yet alike in their eternity and their freedom; with God standing in the midst of them, "more intelligent than them all," and proposing the betterment of their condition—progress to higher levels of being, and power through change—under this conception of things, how stand matters? Why, ever present through all changes, through all the processes of betterment, is the self-existent entity of the "Intelligence" with the tremendous fact of his consciousness and his moral freedom, and his indestructibility—he has his choice of moving upward or downward in every estate he occupies; often defeating, for a time, at least, even the benevolent purposes of God

respecting him, through his own perverseness; he passes through dire experiences, suffers terribly, yet learns by what he suffers, so that his very suffering becomes a means to his improvement; he learns swiftly or slowly, according to the inherent nature of him, obedience to law; he learns that "that which is governed by law is also preserved by law, and perfected and sanctified by the same; and that which breaketh the law and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice nor judgment. Therefore they must remain filthy still." This conception of things relieves God of the responsibility for the nature and status of intelligences in all stages of their development; their inherent nature and their volition makes them primarily what they are, and this nature they may change, slowly, perhaps, yet change it they may. God has put them in the way of changing it, by enlarging their intelligence through change of environment, through experiences; the only way God effects these self-existent beings is favorably; He creates not their inherent nature; He is not responsible for the use they make of their freedom; nor is He the author of their sufferings when they fall into sin: that arises out of the violations of law, to which the "Intelligence" subscribed, and

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JOSEPH SMITH must be endured until the lessons of obedience to law are learned.

This conception of the order of things, as to the existence of “Intelligences” and in the moral government of the world, discovers a harmony in that government which at once challenges our admiration, and bears evidence of its truth.

ETERNITY OF RELATIONSHIPS: Matching these eternal things, an eternal universe, eternal spirit entities, eternal good, with its background of eternal evil,—eternal law, agency and the like, is the Prophet’s doctrine of eternal relations. Intelligences are begotten spirits; spirits are begotten men and women; these become resurrected and exalted personages, spirit and element in them being eternally united, whence proceeds the fulness of joy, and glory, and power. The Prophet taught that these relations, under which such begettings proceed in celestial worlds, are themselves eternal. The marriage covenant which united immortal beings is eternal, hence the eternity of the marriage covenant which Joseph Smith introduced in our dispensation, called the “New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage,” by which marriages, under the law of God, are made in our sacred places for time and eternity. Thus the relationships of exalted Intelligences is also

a thing regulated and sanctified by law; and from these relations come the family, a permanent, eternal institution; whence spring, also, all other relationships existing among the exalted Intelligences of all worlds and world-systems; until, indeed, all are bound and united together in bonds of relationships founded on mutual covenants and agreements, and sanctified by love and sympathy.

We may not pursue this division of our subject further now. I merely call your attention to these doctrines of the Prophet, without making any attempt to weave them into a system of philosophy of things, or of sentient existences; but I am persuaded that these doctrines set forth by the Prophet-Teacher of our dispensation, not indeed as the result of his own, human meditation, but based upon knowledge which God revealed to him—therefore, coming with divine sanction—I am persuaded, I say, that these doctrines contain the elements of a physical, moral and spiritual philosophy that will be the accepted philosophy of the New Age now dawning upon our world; a philosophy that will supersede all other philosophies and remain steadfast in both the beliefs and affections of mankind. The elements, I say, are here in these doctrines; they await only some future Spencer to weave them into synthetic completeness,

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VII.

THE PROPHET'S GENERALIZATIONS.

A WORD in relation to the manner of the Prophet's teaching. It was unique in its way. He may scarcely be said to have made any attempt at creating a system of philosophy however much may be said for his system of religion and of ecclesiastical government. His philosophical principles were flung off in utterances without reference to any arrangement or orderly sequence; and in the main were taught in independent aphorisms, which is a remarkably effective way of teaching, for an aphorism resembles the proverb, and is a form in which Truth is bound to live. It is the American philosopher Emerson, I think, who describes a proverb to be the language of absolute Truth—the statement of Truth without qualification. It is the literature of power. Fortunate, indeed, is the man who gives a people or nation a proverb; and so, too, is the nation or people fortunate who receive it. Like mercy, it is twice blessed, it blesseth him that gives and him that takes. Usually proverbs are produced

by a race's experience. Proverbs come up out of the tribulations of a people. They are produced slowly and represent the hived wisdom of the ages. Books of proverbs are not written by men, to whom they are sometimes ascribed, they represent a collection slowly produced through centuries. Such are the proverbs of our Bible; proverbs of the Chinese classics; and the proverbs of the Hindoo literature. Joseph Smith gave to his age many of these generalized truths, more, I think, than has fallen to the lot of any other teacher, save Jesus, the Christ. I can but repeat a few of these as examples:

“The glory of God is intelligence.”

“It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.”

“A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge.”

“Knowledge saves a man, and in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge.”

“Whatsoever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life will rise with us in the resurrection.”

“If one man, by his diligence, obtains more knowledge than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.”

“There is a law irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated; and

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when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law on which it is predicated.”

“Adam fell that man might be, and men are that they might have joy.”

“This is the glory of God—to bring to pass the immortality and the eternal life of man.”

“The elements are eternal, yea, the elements are the tabernacle of God. Man is the tabernacle of God, even temples.”

“The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably united, receive a fulness of joy [Hence the importance of man’s earth life in which spirit is united to earthly elements.]

“If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves.”

“God Himself was once as we are now; and is an exalted Man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God.”

“The spirit of man is not a created being; it existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity. Anything created cannot be eternal.”

“The spirit and the body is the soul of man; and the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul.”

“It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God,

and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another.”

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“Jesus was in the beginning with the Father. * * * Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.”

“Jesus treads in the footsteps of His Father, and inherits what God did before; and God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all His children.”

“The things of God are of deep import; and time and experience and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man, if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God!”

The Prophet represents God as saying: “I give unto men weaknesses that they might be humble, and my grace is sufficient for all those who humble themselves before me.”

To one who inquired how he governed men so well, he said: “I do not govern them: I teach men correct principles, and they govern themselves.”

These sayings, with many others of like character, in the future literature of America, philosophical and religious, will make

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its pages blaze with glory. They are destined to become generally accepted principles of truth. They will become household aphorisms. They are words spoken by inspiration of God. They come from what Carlyle calls, "the inner Fact of things." They will live to influence the future generations of America, and of men everywhere.

VIII.

AN AMERICAN PROPHET.

AMERICA THE "OLD WORLD:" There is one more thought I would like to present to you respecting this Prophet, Joseph Smith. He is pre-eminently the American Prophet. He is not the "boy prophet;" I dislike that term. He is not the "Prophet of Palmyra;" he is the Prophet of the dispensation of the fulness of times; if localized at all he must be known as the "American Prophet."

Never was greater mistake made than to suppose that the disciples of Joseph Smith could be unpatriotic Americans. They must be ardently patriotic Americans. That this is true, let me a little show it. A line in one of our hymns runs:

"For in Adam-ondi-Ahman,
Zion rose where Eden was."

What is the meaning of this? It means that the Prophet taught that the American continents are not the New World, but the Old; that Eden was here in America. Adamondi-Ahman, the place where Adam dwelt after being driven from Eden, the Prophet declared to be in Missouri, in the valley of the Grand River. He represents a gathering together there of the patriarchs of the antediluvian age: and tells how they blessed Adam, or "Michael," the "Ancient of Days;" and Adam rose among them and blessed the patriarchs, his posterity, and told what should befall them to their latest generations.

Among the Patriarchs Enoch was pre-eminent for righteousness. He, in this western hemisphere, founded a city, sanctified it, and called it "Zion," the abode of the pure in heart; "for this is Zion"—wherein that word relates to a people—"the pure in heart." Hence "Zion rose where Eden was," here in America. But in the course of time "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." That is, according to Paul, God translated him, that he should not see death (Gen. v; Heb. xi); and according to Joseph Smith, this happened to his city also; hence the saying, "Zion's fled."

Then after the Flood, the Lord led to these Western continents the Jaredite colony from the Euphrates valley; and sixteen cen-

JOSEPH SMITH turies later the Nephite colony from Jerusalem. In each case the Lord declared to the peoples so led to the Western world that it was “a choice land above all other lands.” The Savior, in the most glorious manner, after His resurrection from the dead, visited these blessed Western Continents and declared that here should be built a Holy City by the united efforts of the house of Israel, chiefly the descendants of the Patriarch Joseph, of Egyptian fame, and the Gentile races who have right to an inheritance in the land; and the City should be called “Zion,” a “New Jerusalem.” The “Zion” from which “the law should go forth,” as the word of the Lord should go forth from Old Jerusalem. Because of the future establishment of this city, of Zion, upon these western continents, as also on account of Enoch’s Zion, they are called the “Land of Zion.”

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES INSPIRED OF GOD: Joseph Smith also taught that the Constitution of the United States was a God-inspired instrument. “It is not right,” he represents the Lord as saying, “that one man should be in bondage to another;” and hence the Constitution should be maintained for the preservation of the rights, and the protection of all flesh, “according to just and

holy principles, that every man may act in doctrine and principle, pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I [the Lord] have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment. And for this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose.”

So Joseph Smith’s disciples hold the Constitution of the United States to be inspired of God. I think sometimes, however, that we do not realize all that this truth means. We are apt to think of things in mass, and do not take the time to analyze them. What does it mean to say that the Constitution of the United States is an inspired instrument? Undoubtedly, it means primarily that God recognizes the right of the people, in their political capacity, to govern themselves. It expresses the divine belief, so to speak, in the capacity of man for self-government. It means that the people in their political affairs are sovereign; for this is the chief thing which distinguishes the American government from other political systems of government. We are not always happy in our forms of expression. We do not make our terminology always meet our ideas. In spite of the fact just alluded to—viz., the people are sovereign, we talk of, and pray for, “those who rule over us,” meaning pres-

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idents, cabinets, senators, governors, and the like; but these are not "rulers," they are the people's servants, elected for a limited time to administer government according to law, under the provisions of our Constitution; but they serve, they do not rule. The people are sovereign, and the people alone are rulers, and they appoint or elect their servants. Moreover, this Constitution provides for the freedom of the press; for freedom of speech; for freedom and independence of the individual. It guarantees religious liberty, hence a free church, as well as a free state, each independent of and separate from the other. The government is an indestructible Union, composed of indestructible States. To hold that the Constitution which provides for these things, is inspired of God, is to hold that each of these separate things, as well as the thing in mass, is ordained of God by the hands of wise men whom He raised up to establish this system of government; and to deny to the people the enjoyment of these several rights, to undertake, by any means whatsoever, to thwart the realization of government by the people, to attempt to defeat the expression of their will, or make it result different from what their untrammelled judgment would have it, is to make an infraction upon the things that have been ordained of God.

In the above quotation concerning the sys-

tem of Government established by the Constitution of the United States being inspired of God, we may discern the purpose of God in the establishment of such a government. That purpose is that every man may become directly and personally responsible to God for his actions in matters relating to civil government—"that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment." The principle is, however, more fully developed in the Book of Mormon than in the quotation here considered. The incident which develops the principle occurs in the reign of the first Mosiah, and at a period that corresponds with the latter half of the second century B. C. The old king proposed to his people a revolution in the form of government by which monarchy should be abandoned and a republican form of government established in its place. In urging this revolutionary measure the good king said:

"It is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right; therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law, to do your business by the voice of the people. And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the

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judgments of God will come upon you, yea, then is the time He will visit you with great destruction, even as He has hitherto visited this land. * * * And I command you to do these things in the fear of the Lord; and I command you to do these things, and that ye have no king; that if these people commit sins and iniquities, they shall be answered upon their own heads. For behold, I say unto you, the sins of many people have been caused by the iniquities of their kings; therefore their iniquities are answered upon the heads of their kings. And now I desire that this inequality should be no more in this land, especially among this my people; but I desire that this be a land of liberty, that every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike, so long as the Lord sees fit that we may live and inherit the land; yea, even as long as any of our posterity remains upon the face of the land.”

But in order that this element of moral responsibility may be brought into civil government, it stands to reason that every individual must be free and untrammelled in the exercise of his political duties, including the casting of his vote. Each individual must have an equal voice in the government. Every man must be a sovereign in the civil institution, and his vote must represent the voice and judgment of a free man. A vote

unawed by influence, and uncoerced by any power whatsoever. Less than this would convert the whole scheme of government by the voice of the people into mockery. Under a system of government by the people, in order to retain the element of moral responsibility of the people in civil affairs, there must be no appeal but to the intelligent judgment of the individual. Each man's act must be the act of a free man; and those who would corrupt the electorate of a government where the people rule, or sway it by any other force than by an appeal to reason, would destroy this element of personal, moral responsibility in civil government, and in the case of those of us who accept this book from which I am quoting—if we would appeal to any other force than to that of reason or resort to any species of coercion, we would be setting ourselves against an order of things that God has ordained.

Adherence to these principles is pure Americanism. This is constitutional morality. This is both the principle and the policy that will most inure to the perpetuation of our free institutions. This is the sheet-anchor of our safety as a nation—our surest guarantee of God's favor. The man who promulgated this doctrine of individual, personal responsibility to God in the affairs of civil government, where the people rule, is worthy to be numbered among the great-

JOSEPH SMITH est of American statesmen, American teachers, American prophets!

It means a great deal, this idea that the Constitution of the United States is inspired of God!

A MERICA FORTIFIED OF GOD AGAINST OTHER NATIONS: Not only did the Prophet teach the doctrine that the United States Constitution was inspired of God, but he tells us through the Book of Mormon that God has fortified this land against all other nations. I will read you the passage. The Lord said to Lehi:

“Behold, this land shall be the land of thine inheritance, and the Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land. This land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations, and he that fighteth against Zion [these continents of the western world] shall perish, saith God; for he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish, for I, the Lord, the King of Heaven, will be their King, and I will be a light unto them forever that hear my words.”

This guarantee, however, this fortifying this land against all other nations, is upon

a certain condition: the condition that the “God of the land, who is Jesus Christ,” shall be honored by them. On this head I want to read to you a passage from a certain American statesman, that I can easily believe was one of the God-inspired men appointed to assist in the maintenance of true constitutional principles, as others were inspired to found the Constitution. I refer to the great statesman of nationalism, Daniel Webster, who, before the New York Historical society, in 1852, in his last public address, said:

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“Unborn ages and visions of glory crowd upon my soul, the realization of all which, however, is in the hands and good pleasure of Almighty God; but, under His divine blessing, it will be dependent on the character and the virtues of ourselves, and of our posterity. If classical history has been found to be, is now, and shall continue to be, the concomitant of free institutions, and of popular eloquence, what a field is opening to us for another Herodotus, another Thucydides, and another Livy!

“And let me say, gentlemen, that if we and our posterity shall be true to the Christian religion—if we and they shall live always in the fear of God, and shall respect His commandments—if we and they shall maintain just, moral sentiments, and such conscien-

JOSEPH SMITH tious convictions of duty as shall control the heart and life—we may have the highest hopes of the future fortunes of our country, and if we maintain those institutions of government and that political union, exceeding all praise as much as it exceeds all former examples of political associations, we may be sure of one thing—that, while our country furnishes materials for a thousand masters of the historic art, it will afford no topic for a Gibbon. It will have no decline and fall. It will go on prospering and to prosper.

“But if we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political Constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us, that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity. Should that catastrophe happen, let it have no history! Let the horrible narrative never be written! Let its fate be like that of the lost books of Livy, which no human eye shall ever read; or the missing Pleiad, of which no man can ever know more, than that it is lost, and lost forever!”

Such were the sentiments of this patriotic statesman; but the beautiful and flowing

periods in which he expresses his thought, are in no respects better or stronger, or more patriotic than the rugged utterances of Joseph Smith, in whose utterances throughout our sacred books, there is a wealth of pure American sentiment that is the basis of a patriotism that shall yet exceed all praise.

In view of all that is here set forth, I submit that Joseph Smith was pre-eminently the American Prophet.

Standing in the midst of these ideas to which we have ascended in thought about this man and his life's work, all which tend to establish his claims as a Prophet—"a Teacher sent of God"—how unworthy indeed seem the attempts of men to stay his work, or defame his character by their silly misrepresentations! We hear a babel of confused voices coming up from the past, "pelting his memory with their unsavory epithets," but all is vain; he may not be disposed of in such manner.

Meanwhile, the truths he taught will live to instruct mankind, and of Joseph Smith it will yet be said—as Josiah Quincy half predicted sixty-three years ago—He influenced his countrymen more than any other historical American of his time.