

HEARKEN, O YE LATTER-DAY SAINTS, AND ALL YE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH WHO WISH TO BE SAINTS, TO WHOM THIS WRITING SHALL COME

A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Happening lately, while on a preaching trip to Cache Valley, to pick up a book which was lying on a table in the house where we were stopping, we were surprised to find that it was the book bearing the title, on the outside, of "Joseph Smith, the Prophet;" and on the title page, "Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and his progenitors for many generations, by Lucy Smith, mother of the Prophet; published for Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, Liverpool," etc. Our surprise at finding a copy of this work may be accounted for by the fact of our having advertised some time ago that the book was incorrect, and that it should be gathered up and destroyed, so that no copies should be left; and, from this, we had supposed that not a single copy could be found in any of the houses of the Saints.

We now wish to publish our views and feelings respecting this book, so that they may be known to all the Saints in all the world. In Great Britain diligence has been used in collecting and in disposing of this work, and we wish that same diligence continued there and also exercised here, at home, until not a copy is left.

The inquiry may arise in the minds of some persons "why do you want to destroy this book?" Because we are acquainted with individual circumstances alluded to in it, and know many of the statements to be false. We could go through the book and point out many false statements which it contains; but we do not feel to do so. It is sufficient to say that it is utterly unreliable as a history, as it contains many falsehoods and mistakes. We do not wish such a book to be lying on our shelves to be taken up in after years and read by our children as true history, and we, therefore,

expect the High Priests, the Seventies, the Elders, the Bishops, and every one in the Church, male and female, if they have such a book, to dispose of it so that it will never be read by any person again. If they do not, the responsibility of the evil results that may accrue from keeping it will rest upon them and not upon us.

Without entering into all the details of the writing of this book and its production in print, we may say that at the time it was written, which was after the death of the Prophet Joseph, mother Smith was seventy years old, and very forgetful. Her mind had suffered many severe shocks, through losing a beloved husband and four sons of exceeding promise, to whom she was fondly attached, three of whom had but recently fallen victims to mobocratic violence, and she could, therefore, scarcely recollect anything correctly that had transpired. She employed as an amanuensis a lady by the name of Coray.

Those who have read the history of William Smith, and who knew him, know the statements made in that book respecting him when he came out of Missouri to be utterly false. Instead of being the faithful man of God and the Saint which he is there represented to have been, he was a wicked man, and he publicly expressed the hope that his brother Joseph would never get out of the hands of his enemies alive; and he further said that if he had had the disposing of him, he would have hung him years before.

When the book was written mother Smith sent it to us to examine. In company with some others, who were acquainted with the circumstances alluded to in the book, we read the manuscript and we soon saw that it was incorrect. We paid the

amanuensis who wrote the book for mother Smith for a copy of the work, and that copy is now in the Historian's Office, and has been in our possession ever since we left Nauvoo. But the original manuscript was purloined, we suppose, from mother Smith, and went into the hands of apostates, and was purchased of them by Orson Pratt. He had the work published in England. We do not know that Samuel W. Richards, who printed the work, knew anything about the manner in which it was written or how br. Pratt obtained it. He printed it, we suppose, as he would any other book. But brother Pratt had it printed, and published it, without saying a word to the First Presidency or the Twelve about what he was doing. This is the way the book came into being. It was smuggled, juggled and foisted into existence as a book.

The preface of this book was written by brother Orson Pratt. In that he stated that the book was "mostly written previous to the death of the Prophet, and under his personal inspection," which statement is false, and which brother Pratt afterwards corrected in the DESERET NEWS, March 21st, 1855, as follows:

"This work was first published in England, in 1853. I procured the manuscripts while on my last mission in the United States, and was informed, at the time, that most of the work was written under the inspection of the Prophet, but from evidences since received, it is believed that the greater part of the manuscripts did not pass under his review, as there are items which are ascertained to be incorrect."

Many of the Saints may not know that the book is inaccurate; but those who have been instructed respecting its character and will still keep it on their tables and have it in their houses as a valid and authentic history for their children to read, need rebuke. It is transmitting lies to posterity to take such a course, and we know that the curse of God will rest upon every one, after he comes to the knowledge of what is here said, who keeps these books for his children to learn and believe in lies. We wish those who have these books to either

hand them to their Bishops for them to be conveyed to the President's or Historian's Office, or send them themselves, that they may be disposed of; and they will please write their names in the books, with the name of the place where they reside, and if they wish to hand them over without pay in return, state so; and if they wish to get pay for them, state whether they desire it applied on tithing or wish the value returned in other books. When we commenced this article we did not think of extending our comments beyond the work already alluded to. We consider it our duty, however, and advisable for us to incorporate with this, which we have already written, our views upon other doctrines which have been extensively published and widely received as the standard and authoritative doctrines of the church, but which are unsound. The views we allude to, and which we deem objectionable, have been published by Elder Orson Pratt. We have expressed our disapproval of some of these doctrines through the columns of the Millennial Star, published in England, and the DESERET NEWS of this city; there are others, however, of a kindred character, which have not been alluded to in public print, that also require comment, in order that a correct understanding may be had by the Saints respecting them. We do not wish incorrect and unsound doctrines to be handed down to posterity under the sanction of great names, to be received and valued by future generations as authentic and reliable, creating labor and difficulties for our successors to perform and contend with, which we ought not to transmit to them. The interests of posterity are, to a certain extent, in our hands. Errors in history and in doctrine, if left uncorrected by us who are conversant with the events, and who are in a position to judge of the truth or falsity of the doctrines, would go to our children as though we had sanctioned and endorsed them. Such a construction could very easily be put upon our silence respecting them, and would tend to perplex and mislead posterity and make the labor of correction an exceedingly difficult one for them. We know what sanctity there is

always attached to the writings of men who have passed away, especially to the writings of apostles when none of their cotemporaries are left, and we, therefore, feel the necessity of being watchful upon these points. Personal feelings and friendships and associations ought to sink into comparative insignificance and have no weight in view of consequences so momentous to the people and kingdom of God as these.

Moses wrote the history of creation, and we believe that he had the inspiration of the Almighty resting upon him. The prophets who wrote after him were likewise endowed with the Spirit of revelation. The Apostles of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, the personal witnesses of his ministry, revealed many great and glorious truths to the people. The Prophet Joseph, in our own day, was chosen of God, and ordained as a Seer and Revelator, and was made the means of bringing much knowledge to light respecting God and the things of God. But none of these prophets and apostles,—no, not even the Son of God himself—has ever been able, to our knowledge, to inform the world respecting the “Great First Cause” and to explain how the first organized Being was originated. They never were able to reveal to man that every part of the Holy Spirit, however minute and infinitesimal, possessed “every intellectual or moral attribute possessed by the Father and the Son;” or that “the spiritual personages of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, if organized at all, must have been the result of the self-combinations and unions of the pre-existent, intelligent, powerful and eternal particles of matter. The reader may inquire “why they could not reveal this?” It was because there was no such fact in existence. They were evidently content with the knowledge that from all eternity there had existed organized beings, in an organized form, possessing superior and controlling power to govern what Brother Pratt calls the “self-moving, all-wise and all-powerful particles of matter,” and that it was neither rational nor consistent with the revelations of God and with reason and philosophy to believe that

these latter Forces and Powers had existed prior to the Beings who controlled and governed them. But to teach these ideas and to make them public to mankind, after so many ages of ignorance respecting them, has been reserved, according to his own arguments, for Brother Orson Pratt. We must do Brother Orson Pratt the justice, however, to say that he has never claimed to know these things by revelation, still he has published them to the world as facts and as doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In remarks which Bro. Pratt made, Great Salt Lake City, Jan. 29, 1860—remarks which were prompted upon learning our views respecting the doctrines that he had published, and which he delivered without giving intimation of any such intention—while speaking in relation to the things which were deemed objectionable and erroneous by the First Presidency and Twelve—he confessed that he had erred and done wrong in publishing them; he said, that “So far as revelation from the heavens is concerned, I have had none in relation to those points of doctrine;” and he further said, on this same subject: “There is one thing I will insure you of, God will never reveal anything to me, or to any other man; which will come in contact with the views and revelations which he gives to the man who holds the keys. We never need expect such a thing.” These remarks were published in the DESERET NEWS, July 25th, 1860, and the First Presidency appended to them the following comments:

“Elder Pratt sustains an unimpeachable character, as far as strict morality, tried integrity, industry, energy, zeal, faithfulness to his religion, and honesty in all business transactions are concerned, but it will be readily perceived from his remarks, that he does not claim exemption from liability to err in judgment in relation to some points of doctrine. Br. Pratt’s preachings and teachings upon the first principles of the gospel are excellent.

“With regard to the quotations and comments in the Seer as to Adam’s having been formed ‘out of the ground’ and ‘from the dust of the ground,’

&c., it is deemed wisest to let that subject remain without further explanation, for it is written that we are to receive 'line upon line,' according to our faith and capacities, and the circumstances attending our progress.

In the Seer, pages 24 and 25, par. 22,

br. Pratt states:-

All these gods are equal in power, in glory, in dominion, and in the possession of all things; each possesses a fullness of truth, of knowledge, of wisdom, of light, of intelligence; each governs himself in all things by his own attributes, and is filled with love, goodness, mercy and justice towards all. The fullness of all these attributes is what constitutes God.' 'It is truth, light and love that we worship and adore; these are the same in all worlds; and as these constitute God, He is the same in all worlds;' 'wherever you find a fullness of wisdom, knowledge, truth, goodness, love and such like qualities, there you find God in all His glory, power and majesty—therefore, if you worship these adorable perfections, you worship God.'

Seer, page 117, par. 95:-

'Then there will be no Being or Beings in existence that will know one particle more than what we know; then our knowledge and wisdom and power will be infinite; and cannot from thenceforth, be increased or expanded in the least degree.'

Same page, par. 96:-

'But when they' (the Saints) 'become one with the Father and the Son and receive a fullness of their glory, that will be the end of all progression in knowledge, because there will be nothing more to be learned. The Father and the Son do not progress in knowledge and wisdom, because they already know all things past, present and to come.'

Par. 97:-

'There are none among them' (the Gods) 'that are in advance of the others in knowledge; though some may have been Gods as many millions of years as there are particles of dust in all the universe, yet there is not one truth that such are in possession of but what every other God knows.'

'None of these Gods are progressing in knowledge; neither can they progress in the acquirement of any truth.'

"In his treatise entitled 'Great First Cause,' page 16, par.17, br. Pratt states:-

'All the organizations of worlds, of minerals, of vegetables, of animals, of men, of angels, of spirits, and of the spiritual personages of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, must, if organized at all, have been the result of the self-combinations and unions of the pre-existent, intelligent, powerful and eternal particles of substance. These eternal forces and powers are the great first causes of all things and events that have had a beginning.'

"The foregoing quoted ideas, and similar ones omitted to be quoted, with the comments thereon, as advanced by br. Pratt in an article in the Seer, entitled 'Pre-existence of man,' and in his treatise entitled 'Great First Cause,' are plausibly presented. But to the whole subject we will answer in the words of the Apostle Joseph Smith, on a similar occasion. One of the Elders of Israel had written a long communication which he deemed to be very important, and requested br. Joseph to hear him read it. The Prophet commended his style in glowing terms, remarked that the ideas were ingeniously advanced, etc., etc., and that he had but one objection to it. 'What is that?' inquired the writer, greatly elated that his production was considered so near perfect. The Prophet Joseph replied, 'It is not true.'

"This should be a lasting lesson to the Elders of Israel not to undertake to teach doctrine they do not understand. If the Saints can preserve themselves in a present salvation day by day, which is easy to be taught and comprehended, it will be well with them hereafter.

Brigham Young
Heber C. Kimball,
Daniel H. Wells."

In an article, entitled "The Holy Spirit," published by br. Pratt in the Millennial Star, of October 15th, and November 1st, 1850, pages 305-309, and pages 325-328, it is stated, among other things, in relation to the Holy Spirit, that,

"Each part of this substance is all-wise and all-powerful, possessing the same knowledge and the same truth. The essence can be divided into parts like all other matter, but the truth which each part possesses is one truth, and is indivisible; and because of the oneness of the quality, all these parts are called but ONE God. There is a plurality of substance, but a unity of quality; and it is this unity which constitutes the one God which we worship. When we worship the Father, we do not worship merely His substance, but we worship the attributes of that substance; so, likewise, when we worship the Son, we do not merely worship the essence or substance of the Son, but we worship because of his qualities or attributes; in like manner when we worship the Spirit, we do not merely worship a personal substance or a widely diffused substance, but we worship the attributes and qualities of this substance; it is not then the essence alone which is the object of worship, but it is the qualities of the essence. These attributes and qualities, unlike the essence, are undivided; they are whole and entire in every part. A truth is not two truths because it dwells in two or more beings, but we worship it as one truth wherever we find it. Hence if the qualities and attributes are the principal cause of our worship, we worship them as one and the same, wherever they are found, whether in a million of substances or only in one. If these qualities and attributes dwell in all their fullness in every substance of the universe, then one and the same God would dwell in every substance, so far as the qualities are concerned. That the qualities are the real object of worship, and not the essence, is evident from the fact that all essences without their qualities, must be alike in nature, if not in form and magnitude. Therefore one essence without qualities has no more claim to our worship than another."

And again he says:

"We can form some conception of the extreme minuteness of these all-powerful and all-wise atoms of substance, when we reflect that they are capable of being in and through all things. Now there are many solids, so dense that many millions of millions of particles are collected in a space not larger than a grain of mustard seed; now the pores between these particles must be still more minute than the particles themselves; therefore, the particles of that all-wise substance, which is in and through all things, must be sufficiently minute to enter these extremely small pores, surrounding every atom, and pervading the whole mass, governing and controlling it according to fixed and definite laws."

In a tract, bearing the same title as the article just quoted from, one of a series of eight tracts which br. Pratt published in England in the year 1856, in reasoning upon the difference between the Holy Spirit and the being known as the Holy Ghost, it is stated on page 51, par. 11, that,

"On this occasion," [the day of Pentecost,] "portions of this Holy Fluid assumed the form of 'Cloven Tongues like as of Fire.' It is very doubtful whether a permanent personal spirit would dissolve its personality, and transform its parts into one hundred and twenty tongues, having the appearance of fire. But a living, self-moving fluid substance might transform itself into any shape it pleased, and render itself visible in the form of tongues, or in the form of a dove, or in a personal form, resembling the image of man."

And further on page 53, par. 18, he says,

"This boundless ocean of spirit possesses in every part, however minute, a will, a self-moving power, knowledge, wisdom, love, goodness, holiness, justice, mercy, and every intellectual and moral attribute possessed by the Father and the Son. Each particle of this Holy Spirit knows, every instant, how to act upon the other materials of nature with which it is immediately associated: it knows how to vary the gravitating tendency of a particle of matter, every moment, precisely in the inverse ra-

tio of the square of its distance from every other particle in the universe. Where an infinite number of particles of matter are in motion, and every instant changing their relative distances from each other, it must require an overwhelming amount of discernment and knowledge, for each particle of the spirit to perceive every motion of every other particle, and every instant to know the relative positions and distances of every particle in the universe. And yet without such knowledge, the gravitating intensity could not be varied, according to the strict law which is known to exist. For the Holy Spirit to move all the materials of nature, according to this one law, requires a wisdom and knowledge incomprehensible to mortal man."

Again, on page 53, par. 20, it is stated that, "Man has been accustomed to associate wisdom, knowledge, love, joy and all the other faculties and passions, with an organized being or personality. Therefore, when he is informed that the Holy Spirit possesses all these attributes, he, from habit, supposes it to be a person; but there is no necessary connection between these attributes and a personality. Indeed, there is no reason why these attributes may not also belong to a fluid substance. We see life and voluntary motion exhibited by beings of every conceivable shape and magnitude, from man down through every grade of existence to the microscopic animalcules. Many of these inconceivably small beings appear to be merely minute globules or particles of living substance. Such being the case, why may not the still smaller particles of the Holy Spirit be alive also? and why may they not also possess all the elementary attributes of a spiritual personage or organization? Is there anything in the mere shape or magnitude of organized spirit-matter, that should cause it to differ in its elementary attributes from unorganized spirit-matter? Certainly not. Therefore, it is perfectly consistent and analogous with what we see in nature, to attribute life, voluntary motion, and numerous other attributes and qualities, to a fluid substance, or to each of its particles."

And on page 55, paragraph 25, it is said that, "By the power of their [the Father and the Son] word the Spirit would set those worlds into harmonious motion; by the power of Their word the Spirit would move the particles in nature according to the law of gravitation; by Their word the Spirit would move every substance according to the varied laws which now exist. By the power of Their word the Spirit could suspend its operations in one way, and operate in another, directly opposite, causing what the world generally calls a miracle. Through the agency of such a universal Spirit, a person could exercise almighty power throughout every department of nature. Particles, worlds and universes would obey, the Spirit being the great grand executor of all the sublime and majestic movements exhibited in boundless space."

On the same page, paragraph 27, it reads, "But if the body of each Saint is full of the Holy Ghost, it is evident that this holy substance dwelling in each temple must assume the same shape and magnitude as the temple which it fills. If any one should, by vision, behold the tabernacle of man filled throughout with this substance, he would perceive it existing in a personal form of the same size and shape as the human spirit or tabernacle. And if he should behold a million of such bodily temples thus filled, he would see a million of personal beings called the Holy Ghost; but each one of these, though one with all the others in the attributes, would be distinct in substance from all the rest. They are distinct personal forms which the spiritual fluid assumes, upon entering human bodies, so as to accommodate itself to the size and form of the respective human temples which it inhabits."

We have quoted some of the items which stand out most prominently in the publications referred to, and which strike us as being most objectionable. They are self-confounding and conflict one with another, and, to our minds, some of the statements, if pursued to their legitimate conclusion, would convey the idea that the physical and spir-

itual organization of a human being conferred no additional powers or benefits on the creature thus organized, but that any single atom of the “spiritual fluid,” however minute, possessed every attribute that an organized being could possess. Yet it will readily be perceived, upon reflection, that attributes never can be made manifest in any world except through organized beings.

There are great and important truths connected with the eternities of our God and with man’s existence past, present and future, which the Almighty, in His wisdom, sees fit to conceal from the children of men. The latter are evidently unprepared to receive them, and there could be no possible benefit accrue to them, at present, from their revelation. It is in this light that we view the points of doctrine which we have quoted. If they were true, we would think it unwise to have them made public as these have been. But the expounder of these points of doctrine acknowledges that he has not had any revelation from the heavens in relation to them, and we know that we have had no revelation from God respecting them, except to know that many of them are false, and that the publication of all of them is unwise and objectionable. They are mere hypotheses, and should be perused and accepted as such; and not as doctrines of the Church. Whenever Br. Orson Pratt has written upon that which he knows, and has confined himself to doctrines which he understands, his arguments are convincing and unanswerable, but, when he has indulged in hypotheses and theories, he has launched forth on an endless sea of speculation to which there is no horizon. The last half of the tract entitled “The Holy Spirit” contains excellent and conclusive arguments, and is all that could be wished; so also with many of his writ-

ings. But the Seer, the Great First Cause, the article in the Millennial Star of October 15, and November 1, 1850, on the Holy Spirit, and the first half of the tract, also on the Holy Spirit, contain doctrines which we cannot sanction, and which we have felt impressed to disown, so that the Saints who now live, and who may live hereafter, may not be misled by our silence, or be left to misinterpret it. Where these objectionable works, or parts of works, are bound in volumes, or otherwise, they should be cut out and destroyed; with proper care this can be done without much, if any, injury to the volumes.

It ought to have been known, years ago, by every person in the Church—for ample teachings have been given on the point—that no member of the Church has the right to publish any doctrines, as the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, without first submitting them for examination and approval to the First Presidency and the Twelve. There is but one man upon the earth, at one time, who holds the keys to receive commandments and revelations for the Church, and who has the authority to write doctrines by way of commandment unto the Church. And any man who so far forgets the order instituted by the Lord as to write and publish what may be termed new doctrines, without consulting with the First Presidency of the Church respecting them, places himself in a false position and exposes himself to the power of darkness by violating his priesthood. While upon this subject, we wish to warn all the Elders of the Church, and to have it clearly understood by the members, that, in the future, whoever publishes any new doctrines without first taking this course will be liable to lose his priesthood.

BRIGHAM YOUNG,
HEBER C. KIMBALL,
ORSON HYDE,
JOHN TAYLOR,

WILFORD WOODRUFF,
GEORGE A. SMITH,
AMASA M. LYMAN,
EZRA T. BENSON,
GEORGE Q. CANNON.

CHARLES C. RICH,
LORENZO SNOW,
ERASTUS SNOW,
FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS,