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The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology

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Perhaps the main barrier to understanding the development of Mormon theology is an underlying assumption by most Church members that there is a cumulative unity of doctrine. Mormons seem to believe that particular doctrines develop consistently, that ideas build on each other in hierarchical fashion. As a result, older revelations are interpreted by referring to current doctrinal positions. Thus, most members would suppose that a scripture or statement at any point in time has resulted from such orderly change. While this type of exegesis or interpretation may produce systematic theology and while it may satisfy those trying to understand and internalize current doctrine, it is bad history since it leaves an unwarranted impression of continuity and consistency.[1]

By examining particular beliefs at specific junctures in Church history, this essay explores how certain doctrines have in fact developed. I have made every effort to restate each doctrine as contemporaries most likely understood it, without superimposing later developments. This essay focuses on the period from 1830 to 1835, the initial era of Mormon doctrinal development, and on the period from 1893 through 1925, when much of current doctrine seems to have been systematized. Since a full exposition of all doctrines is impossible in a short paper, I have singled out the doctrines of God and man. Placing the development of these doctrines into historical context will also illuminate the appearance of so-called Mormon neo-orthodoxy (a term borrowed from twentieth century Protestantism), which emphasizes particular ideas about the sovereignty of God and the depravity of man.[2]

I. The Construction of Mormon Doctrine 1830 - 1835

Historians have long recognized the importance of the Nauvoo experience in the formulation of distinctive Latter-day Saint doctrines. What is not so apparent is that before about 1835 the LDS doctrines on God and man were quite close to those of contemporary Protestant denominations.

Of course the problem of understanding doctrine at particular times consists not only in determining what was disseminated but also in pinpointing how contemporary members perceived such beliefs. Diaries of Church leaders would be most helpful. Currently available evidence indicates that members of the First Presidency, particularly Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Frederick G. Williams, and Sidney Rigdon were the principal persons involved in doctrinal development prior to 1835. Unfortunately, the only available diary from among that group is Joseph Smith's, which has been edited and published as History of the Church.[3]

Church publications from this period are important sources of doctrine and doctrinal commentary, given the lack of diaries. After the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, the Church supported The Evening and the Morning Star in Independence (June 1832 - July 1833) and Kirtland (December 1833 - September 1834). In October 1834, the Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate (Kirtland, October 1834 - September 1837) replaced the Star. Both monthlies published expositions on doctrine, letters from Church members, revelations, minutes of conferences, and other items of interest. William W. Phelps published a collection of Joseph Smith's revelations in the 1833 Book of Commandments, but destruction of the press and most copies left the Star and Messenger virtually the only sources of these revelations until 1835. In that year, the Doctrine and Covenants, which included the Lectures on Faith and presented both revelation and doctrinal exposition, was published.[4]

The doctrines of God and man revealed in these sources were not greatly different from those of some of the religious denominations of the time. Marvin Hill has argued that the Mormon doctrine of man in New York contained elements of both Calvinism and Armenianism, though tending toward the latter. The following evidence shows that it was much closer to the moderate Armenian position, particularly in rejecting the Calvinist emphasis on absolute and unconditional predestination, limited atonement, total depravity, and

absolute perseverance of the elect.[5] It will further demonstrate that the doctrine of God preached and believed before 1835 was essentially trinitarian, with God the Father seen as an absolute personage of Spirit, Jesus Christ as a personage of tabernacle, and the Holy Ghost as an impersonal spiritual member of the Godhead.

The Book of Mormon tended to define God as an absolute personage of spirit who, clothed in flesh, revealed himself in Jesus Christ (Abinidi's sermon to King Noah in Mosiah chapters 13-14 is a good example). The first issue of the Evening and Morning Star published a similar description of God, the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ," which was the Church's first statement of faith and practice. With some additions, the "Articles" became section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The "Articles," which according to correspondence in the Star was used with the Book of Mormon in proselytizing, indicated that "there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth and all things which are in them."

The Messenger and Advocate published numbers 5 and 6 of the Lectures on Faith, which defined the "Father" as "the only supreme governor, and independent being, in whom all fullness and perfection dwells; who is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient; without beginning of days or end of life." In a letter published in the Messenger and Advocate, Warren A. Cowdery argued that "we have proven to the satisfaction of every intelligent being, that there is a great first cause, prime mover, self-existent, independent and all wise being whom we call God . . . immutable in his purposes and unchangeable in his nature."[6]

On the doctrine of creation, these works assumed that God or Christ was the creator, but they did not address the question of ex nihilo creation. There is little evidence that Church doctrine either accepted or rejected the idea or that it specifically differentiated between Christ and God.[7]

Indeed, this distinction was probably considered unnecessary since the early discussions also supported trinitarian doctrine.

Joseph Smith's 1832 account of the First Vision spoke only of one personage and did not make the explicit separation of God and Christ found in the 1838 version. The Book of Mormon declared that Mary "is the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh," which as James Allen and Richard Howard have pointed out was changed in 1837 to "mother of the Son of God." Abinidi's sermon in the Book of Mormon explored the relationship between God and Christ: "God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son--The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son--And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth." (Mosiah 15:1-4.)[8]

The Lectures on Faith differentiated between the Father and Son somewhat more explicitly, but even they did not define a materialistic, tritheistic Godhead. In announcing the publication of the Doctrine and Covenants which included the Lectures on Faith, the Messenger and Advocate commented editorially that it trusted the volume would give "the churches abroad . . . a perfect understanding of the doctrine believed by this society." The Lectures declared that "there are two personages who constitute the great matchless, governing and supreme power over all things--by whom all things were created and made." They are "the Father being a personage of spirit," and "the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, made, or fashioned like unto man, or being in the form and likeness of man, or, rather, man was formed after his likeness, and in his image." The "Articles and Covenants" called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost "one God" rather than the Godhead, a term which Mormons generally use today to separate themselves from trinitarians.[9]

The doctrine of the Holy Ghost presented in these early sources is even more striking compared to the point of view defended in our time. The Lectures on Faith defined the Holy Ghost as the mind of the Father and the Son, a member of the Godhead, but not a personage, who binds the Father and Son together. This view of the Holy Ghost reinforced trinitarian doctrine by explaining how personal beings like the Father and Son become one God through the noncorporeal presence of a shared mind.[10]

If the doctrines of the Godhead in the early Church were close to trinitarian doctrine, the teachings of man seemed quite close to Methodist Arminianism, which saw man as a creature of God, but capable of sanctification. Passages in the Book of Mormon seemed to indicate that in theological terms man was "essentially and totally a creature of God."[11] Alma's commandments to Corianton in chapters 39 through 42 defined man as a creation of God who became "carnal, sensual, and devilish by nature" after the Fall (Alma 42:10). Man was in the hand of justice, and mercy from God was impossible without the atonement of Christ. King Benjamin's discussion of creation, Adam's fall, and the alinement in Mosiah chapters 2 through 4 viewed man and all creation as creatures of God (Mosiah 2:23-26; 4:9, 19, 21). Warren Cowdery's letter in the Messenger and Advocate argued that though "man is the more noble and intelligent part of this lower creation, to whom the other grades in the scale of being are subject, yet, the man is dependent on the great first cause and is constantly upheld by him, therefore justly amenable to him."[12]

The book of Mormon included a form of the doctrine of original sin, defined as a "condition of sinfulness [attaching] as a quality or property to every person simply by virtue of his humanness." Though sinfulness inhered in mankind from the fall of Adam according to early works, it applied to individual men only from the age of accountability and ability to repent, not from birth. Very young children were free from

this sin, but every accountable person merited punishment.[13] Lehi's discussion of the necessity of opposition in II Nephi 2, particularly verses 7 through 13, made such sinfulness a necessary part of God's plan, since the law, the atonement, and righteousness--indeed the fulfillment of the purposes of the creation--were contingent upon man's sinfulness.

An article in The Evening and the Morning Star supported this view by attributing "this seed of corruption to the depravity of nature. It attributeth the respect that we feel for virtue, to the remains of the image of God, in which we were formed, and which can never be entirely effaced. Because we were born in sin, the Gospel concludes that we ought to apply all our attentive endeavors to eradicate the seeds of corruption. And, because the image of the Creator is partly erased from our hearts, the gospel concludes that we ought to give our-selves wholly to the retracing of it, and so to answer the excellence of our extraction."[14]

These early Church works also exhibit a form of Christian Perfectionism, which held man capable of freely choosing to become perfect like God and Christ but which rejected irresistible grace. The Evening and Morning Star said that "God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the more conspicuous are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, until he has overcome the evils of this life and lost every desire of sin; and like the ancients, arrives to that point of faith that he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with him."

The Lectures on Faith argued that we can become perfect if we purify our-selves to become "holy as he is holy, and perfect as he is perfect," and thus like Christ.[15] A similar sentiment was expressed in Moroni 10:32 which declared "that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ."

As Marvin Hill and Timothy Smith have argued, much of the doctrine that early investigators found in Mormonism was similar to contemporary Protestant churches. The section on the nature of God in the "Articles and Covenants," now Doctrine and Covenants 20:17-28, was similar to the creeds of other churches. In fact, what is now verses 23 and 24 is similar to passages in the Apostle's Creed.[16]

On the doctrines of God and man, the position of the LDS Church between 1830 and 1835 was probably closest to that of the Disciples of Christ and the Methodists, though differences existed. Alexander Campbell, for instance, objected to the use of the term "Trinity" but argued that "the Father is of none, neither begotten nor preceding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." Methodist teaching was more explicitly trinitarian than that of either the Disciples or the Mormons. All three groups believed in an absolute spiritual Father.

Methodists, Disciples, and Mormons also believed to some degree in the perfectibility of man. As Alexander Campbell put it, "Perfection is . . . the glory and felicity of man . . . . There is a true, a real perfectibility of human character and of human nature, through the soul-redeeming mediation and holy spiritual influence of the great Philanthropist." Methodists believed that all "real Christians are so perfect as not to live in outward sin."[17]

Mormons rejected the Calvinistic doctrines of election, which were basically at odds with their belief in perfectionism and free will, but so did the Methodists and Disciples. In the discussion of the Fall and redemption, Nephi declared that "Adam fell that men might be and men are that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). This joy was found through the redemption from the Fall which allowed men to "act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given" (2 Nephi 2:26). Like Methodist doctrine, however, the LDS doctrine of perfectionism began with the sovereignty of God and the depravity of unregenerate man. A careful reading of Mormon scriptures and doctrinal statements, however, leads to the conclusion that LDS doctrine went beyond the beliefs of the Disciples and Methodists in differentiating more clearly between Father and Son and in anticipating the possibility of human perfection through the atonement of Christ.[18]

Nevertheless, that there was disagreement--often violent disagreement--between the Mormons and other denominations is evident. The careful student of the Latter-day Saint past needs to determine, however, where the source of disagreement lay. Campbell in his Delusions, An Analysis of the Book of Mormon lumped Joseph Smith with the false Christs because of his claims to authority and revelation from God, and he objected to some doctrines. He also attacked the sweeping and authoritative nature of the Book of Mormon with the comment that Joseph Smith "decides all the great controversies--infant baptism, ordination, the trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, eternal punishment, [and] who may baptize." Nevertheless, he recognized somewhat backhandedly that the Book of Mormon spoke to contemporary Christians with the comment that "The Nephites, like their fathers for many generations, were good Christians, believers in the doctrines of the Calvinists and Methodists." Campbell and others before 1835 objected principally to claims of authority, modern revelation, miracles, and communitarianism but not to the doctrines of God and man.[19]

II. Laying the Basis for Doctrinal Reconstruction 1832-1890

During the remaining years of Joseph Smith's lifetime and into the late nineteenth century, various doctrines were proposed, some which were later abandoned and others adopted in the reconstruction of Mormon

doctrine after 1890. Joseph Smith and other Church leaders laid the basis for the reconstruction with revelation and doctrinal exposition between 1832 and 1844. Three influences seem to have been responsible for the questions leading to these revelations and insights.

First was the work of Joseph Smith and others, particularly Sidney Rigdon, on the inspired revision of the Bible (especially John's Gospel and some of the letters of John). Questions which arose in the course of revision led to the revelations contained in Doctrine and Covenants 76 and 93, and perhaps section 88. These revelations were particularly important because they carried the doctrine of perfectionism far beyond anything generally acceptable to contemporary Protestants, including Methodists. Evidence from the period indicates, however, that the implications of this doctrine were not generally evident in the Mormon community until 1838.[20]

The second influence was the persecution of the Saints in Jackson County. This persecution also intensified the emphasis on perfectionism--which eventually led to the doctrine of eternal progression. As the Saints suffered and persevered, the Star reemphasized the idea that the faithful could become Christlike, and a side of man's nature quite apart from his fallen state was thus affirmed.[21]

The third influence was the work of Joseph Smith and others on the Book of Abraham. Though Joseph Smith and others seem to have worked on the first two chapters of this book following 1835, the parts following chapter two were not written until 1842. Still Doctrine and Covenants 121:31-32 indicates that Joseph Smith believed in the plurality of gods as early as 1839.[22]

Thereafter, between 1842 and 1844 Joseph Smith spoke on and published doctrines such as the plurality of gods, the tangibility of God's body, the distinct separation of God and Christ, the potential of man to become and function as a god, the explicit rejection of ex nihilo creation, and the materiality of everything including spirit. These ideas were perhaps most clearly stated in the King Follett discourse of April 1844.[23]

Because doctrine and practice changed as the result of new revelation and exegesis, some members who had been converted under the doctrines of the early 1830s left the Church. John Corrill exhibited disappointment rather than rancor and defended the Church against outside attack, but left because of the introduction of doctrine which he thought contradicted those of the Book of Mormon and the Bible.[24]

It seems clear that certain ideas which developed between 1832 and 1844 were internalized after 1835 and accepted by the Latter-day Saints. This was particularly true of the material anthropomorphism of God and Jesus Christ, advanced perfectionism as elaborated in the doctrine of eternal progression, and the potential godhood of man.

Between 1845 and 1890, however, certain doctrines were proposed which were later rejected or modified. In an address to rulers of the world in 1845, for instance, the Council of the Twelve wrote of the "great Eloheem Jehovah" as though the two names were synonymous, indicating that the identification of Jehovah with Christ had little meaning to contemporaries. In addition, Brigham Young preached that Adam was not only the first man, but that he was the god of this world. Acceptance of the King Follett doctrine would have granted the possibility of Adam being a god, but the idea that he was god of this world conflicted with the later Jehovah-Christ doctrine. Doctrines such as those preached by Orson Pratt, harking back to the Lectures on Faith and emphasizing the absolute nature of God, and Amasa Lyman, stressing radical perfectionism which denied the necessity of Christ's atonement, were variously questioned by the First Presidency and Twelve. In Lyman's case, his beliefs contributed to his excommunication.[25]

The newer and older doctrines thus coexisted, and all competed with novel positions spelled out by various Church leaders. The Lectures on Faith continued to appear as part of the Doctrine and Covenants in a section entitled "Doctrine and Covenants," as distinguished from the "Covenants and Commandments" which constitute the current Doctrine and Covenants. The Pearl of Great Price containing the Book of Abraham was published in England in 1851 as a missionary tract and was accepted as authoritative in 1880. The earliest versions of Parley P. Pratt's Key to the Science of Theology and Brigham H. Roberts's The Gospel both emphasized an omnipresent, non-personal Holy Ghost, though Pratt's emphasis was radically materialistic and Roberts's more allegorical. Both were elaborating ideas addressed in the King Follett sermon.[26] Such fluidity of doctrine, unusual from a twentieth century perspective, characterized the nineteenth century Church.

III. The Progressive Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine 1893-1925

By 1890 the doctrines preached in the Church combined what would seem today both familiar and strange. Yet, between 1890 and 1925 these doctrines were reconstructed principally on the basis of works by three European immigrants, James E. Talmage, Brigham H. Roberts, and John A. Widtsoe. Widtsoe and Talmage did much of their writing before they became apostles, but Roberts served as a member of the First Council of the Seventy during the entire period.

Perhaps the most important doctrine addressed was the doctrine of the Godhead, which was reconstructed beginning in 1893 and 1894. During that year James E. Talmage, president of Latter-day Saints University and later president and professor of geology at the University of Utah, gave a series of lectures on the Articles of Faith to the theological class of LDSU. In the fall of 1898 the First Presidency asked him

to rewrite the lectures and present them for approval as an exposition of Church doctrines. In the process, Talmage reconsidered and reconstructed the doctrine of the Holy Ghost.

In response to questions raised by Talmage's lectures, George Q. Cannon, "commenting on the ambiguity existing in our printed works concerning the nature of character of the Holy Ghost, expressed his opinion that the Holy Ghost was in reality a person, in the image of the other members of the Godhead--a man in form and figure; and that what we often speak of as the Holy Ghost is in reality but the power or influence of the spirit." The First Presidency on that occasion, however, "deemed it wise to say as little as possible on this as on other disputed subjects."[27]

In 1894 Talmage published an article in the Juvenile Instructor elaborating on his and Cannon's views. He incorporated the article almost verbatim into his manuscript for the Articles of Faith, and the Presidency approved the article virtually without change in 1898.

The impact of the Articles of Faith on doctrinal exposition within the Church seems to have been enormous. Some doctrinal works like B. H. Roberts's 1888 volume The Gospel were quite allegorical on the nature of God. Christ, and the Holy Ghost. In the 1901 edition, after the publication of the Articles of Faith, Roberts explicitly revised his view of the Godhead, modifying his discussion and incorporating Talmage's more literal interpretation of the Holy Ghost.[28]

By 1900 it was impossible to consider the doctrines of God and man without dealing with evolution. Darwin's Origin of Species had been in print for four decades, and scientific advances together with changing attitudes had introduced many secular-rational ideas. James E. Talmage and John A. Widtsoe had confronted these ideas as they studied at universities in the United States and abroad. As early as 1881 Talmage had resolved to "do good among the young," possibly by lecturing on the "harmony between geology and the Bible." In 1898 Talmage urged George Q. Cannon to have the General Authorities give "careful, and perhaps official consideration to the scientific questions on which there is at least a strong appearance of antagonism with religious creeds." Cannon agreed, and Talmage recorded a number of interviews with the First Presidency on the subject. In a February 1900 article Talmage argued that science and religion had to be reconciled since "faith is not blind submission, passive obedience, with no effort at thought or reason. Faith, if worthy of its name, rests upon truth; and truth is the foundation of science."[29]

Just as explicit in his approach was John A. Widtsoe. Norwegian immigrant and graduate of Harvard and Goettingen, Widtsoe came early to the conclusion that the "scriptural proof of the truth of the gospel had been quite fully developed and was unanswerable." He "set out therefore to present [his] modest contributions from the point of view of science and those trained in that type of thinking." Between November 1903 and July 1904 he published a series of articles in the Improvement Era under the title "Joseph Smith as Scientist." The articles, republished in 1908 as the YMMIA course of study, argued that Joseph Smith anticipated many scientific theories and discoveries.[30]

Joseph Smith as Scientist, like Widtsoe's later A Rational Theology, drew heavily on Herbert Spencer's theories and ideas elaborated from Joseph Smith's later thought. The gospel, Widtsoe argued, recognized the reality of time, space, and matter. The universe is both material and eternal, and God had organized rather than created it.

Thus, God was not the creator, nor was he omnipotent. He too was governed by natural law, which was fundamental. Widtsoe correlated this view of the creation with Spencer's views on development toward increasing heterogeneity and argued that Spencer's theory was equivalent to Joseph Smith's idea of eternal progression. As man acquired knowledge, he also gained power, which allowed endless advancement.[31]

God did not create--or rather organize--in a way man might yet comprehend, since man's understanding was still developing. Rather, "great forces, existing in the universe, and set into ceaseless operation by the directing intelligence of God, assembled and brought into place the materials constituting the earth, until, in the course of long periods of time, this sphere was fitted for the abode of man." This much he did know, that God with the assistance of Jehovah and Michael, had worked through the "forces of nature act[ing] steadily but slowly in the accomplishment of great works."[32]

Even though the publications of Talmage, Roberts, and Widtsoe had established the Church's basic doctrines of the Godhead, members and non-members were still confused. In 1911. George F. Richards spoke in the tabernacle on the nature of God. Afterward, a member challenged him, arguing that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were one God rather than three distinct beings. Richards disagreed and cited scriptural references including Joseph Smith's first vision.[33]

In February 1912, detractors confronted elders in the Central States Mission with the Adam-God theory. In a letter to President Samuel O. Bennion, the First Presidency argued that Brigham Young did not mean to say that Adam was God, and at a special priesthood meeting during the April 1912 general conference, they presented and secured approval for a declaration that Mormons worship God the Father, not Adam.[34]

Reconsideration of the doctrine of God and the ambiguity in discourse and printed works over the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ pointed to the need for an authoritative statement on the nature and mission of Christ.

During the years 1904-1906, Talmage had delivered a series of lectures entitled "Jesus the Christ" at Latter-day Saints University. The First Presidency asked Talmage to incorporate the lectures into a book, but

he had suspended the work to fill other assignments. In September 1914, however, the Presidency asked Talmage to prepare "the book with as little delay as possible." In order to free him "from visits and telephone calls" and "in view of the importance of the work," he was "directed to occupy a room in the Temple where" he would "be free from interruption." After completing the writing in April 1915, he said that he had "felt the inspiration of the place and . . . appreciated the privacy and quietness incident thereto." The Presidency and Twelve raised some questions about specific portions, but they agreed generally with the work, which elaborated views expressed previously in the Articles of Faith.[35]

It seems clear that by 1916 then, the ideas which Joseph Smith and other leaders had proposed (generally after 1835) were serving as the framework for continued development of the doctrine of God. Talmage's initial discussion in the Articles of Faith had been followed by such works as Widtsoe's Joseph Smith as Scientist and Rational Theology; Roberts's Seventies Course in Theology, the revised New Witness for God, and History of the Church; and finally Talmage's Jesus the Christ. In retrospect, it seems that these three men had undertaken a reconstruction which carried doctrine far beyond anything described in the Lectures on Faith or generally believed by Church members prior to 1835.

Official statements were required to canonize doctrines on the Father and the Son, ideas which were elaborated by the progressive theologians. A clarification was particularly necessary because of the ambiguity in the scriptures and in authoritative statements about the unity of the Father and the Son, the role of Jesus Christ as Father, and the roles of the Father and Son in creation. A statement for the Church membership prepared by the First Presidency and the Twelve, apparently first drafted by Talmage, was published in 1916. The statement made clear the separate corporeal nature of the two beings and delineated their roles in the creation of the earth and their continued relationships with this creation. The statement was congruent with the King Follett discourse and the work of Talmage, Widtsoe, and Roberts.[36]

This elaboration, together with the revised doctrine of the Holy Ghost, made necessary the revision and redefinition of work previously used. By January 1915, Charles W. Penrose had completed a revision of Parley P. Pratt's Key to the Science of Theology. Penrose deleted or altered passages which discussed the Holy Ghost as nonpersonal and which posited a sort of "spiritual fluid," pervading the universe.[37]

The clarification of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost and the relationship between the three members of the Godhead also made necessary the revision of the Lectures on Faith. A meeting of the Twelve and First Presidency in November 1917 considered the question of the Lectures, particularly Lecture Five. At that time, they agreed to append a footnote in the next edition. This proved unnecessary when the First Presidency appointed a committee consisting of George F. Richards, Anthony W. Ivins, James E. Talmage, and Melvin J. Ballard to review and revise the entire Doctrine and Covenants. The initial reason for the committee was the worn condition of the printer's plates and the discrepancies which existed between the current edition and Roberts's edition of the History of the Church.[38]

Revision continued through July and August 1921, and the Church printed the new edition in late 1921. The committee proposed to delete the Lectures on Faith on the ground that they were "lessons prepared for use in the School of the Elders, conducted in Kirtland, Ohio, during the winter of 1834-35; but they were never presented to nor accepted by the Church as being otherwise than theological lectures or lessons." How the committee came to this conclusion is uncertain. The general conference of the Church in April 1835 had accepted the entire volume, including the Lectures, not simply the portion entitled "Covenants and Commandments," as authoritative and binding upon Church members.[39] What seems certain, however, is that the interpretive exegesis of 1916 based upon the reconstructed doctrine of the Godhead had superseded the Lectures.

If the 1916 statement essentially resolved the Latter-day Saint doctrine of God along the lines suggested by Talmage, Widtsoe, and Roberts, the work of these three men, while suggesting a doctrine of man, did not lead to a similar authoritative statement, except on the question of the relation of the creation to natural selection. Still, the work of these progressive theologians provided a framework for understanding man which went relatively unchallenged until the recent development of Mormon neo-orthodoxy. Talmage's Articles of Faith considered a number of doctrines relating to man, such as the foreknowledge of God, which have important consequences for the doctrine of free will. In the first edition, Talmage wrote that "the Fall was fore-ordained, as a means whereby man could be brought face to face with both good and evil." This was later changed, and the word "fore-ordained" was replaced by "foreseen," indicating an unwillingness to take such a definite stand on a doctrine so close to freedom of the will.[40]

Talmage also argued that the doctrine of free will made impossible any predisposition to evil on the part of "God's children." "Man," Talmage wrote, "inherits absolute freedom to choose the good or the evil in life as he may elect." God "has left the mortal creature free to choose and to act, with no semblance of compulsion or restraint, beyond the influences of paternal counsel and loving direction." Such a radical doctrine of free will essentially rejected the ideas implicit in the Book of Mormon by denying man's predisposition under any conditions to evil, whether before or after the Fall.[41]

The Articles of Faith also considered the question of the movement from one kingdom of glory to another after death. In the first edition "eternal progression" included not only "advancement from grade to grade within any kingdom" but also movement "from kingdom to kingdom." Later, probably to hedge on

the certainty of the doctrine, this was changed to say that though movement within the kingdoms was certain, as to "progress from one kingdom to another the scriptures made no positive affirmation."[42]

The whole matter of the doctrine of man was tied up with the question of the eternality of the family and the importance of sexual relationships, here and hereafter, for procreation and love. In his New Witness for God. B. H. Roberts confronted this problem when he chastised those who objected to Mormon doctrine as too materialistic. "If any one shall say that such views of the life to come are too materialistic, that they smack too much of earth and its enjoyments, my answer is, that if it be inquired what thing has contributed most to man's civilization and refinement, to his happiness and dignity, his true importance, elevation and honor in earth-life, it will be found that the domestic relations in marriage, the ties of family, of parentage, with its joys, responsibilities, and affections will be selected as the one thing before all others." Man, he said, in this and other ways was becoming like God because man was God in embryo.[43]

As Roberts prepared the New Witness and the first edition of Joseph Smith's History of the Church, other questions relating to the doctrine of man arose. On 6 February 1907 in the First Presidency's office, the First Presidency and six members of the Council of the Twelve heard Roberts read a passage on the pre-existence of man for inclusion in the New Witness. The chief point of Roberts's discussion was his view that the elements of man became a spirit--a child to God--through pre-mortal birth. After all, he pointed out, the brother of Jared saw Christ's pre-mortal spirit body. Following the discussion, the brethren agreed to incorporate the passage essentially as written, and they also included this view in the First Presidency's 1909 statement on the origin of man.[44]

In 1911, however, while preparing the History of the Church, Roberts had somewhat more difficulty in selling his views on the nature of pre-existent intelligences. Roberts read his article on the philosophy of Joseph Smith to the First Presidency. In the article, he argued that intelligences were self-existent entities before becoming spirits. Charles W. Penrose particularly opposed this view, and the First Presidency asked Roberts to delete the sections. Anthon H. Lund--probably rightly--was convinced that Roberts wanted to prove that man was co-eternal with God, something which the First Presidency then rejected. Roberts agreed to remove the passages but undoubtedly believed his views were inspired. Penrose also considered the King Follett discourse spurious, and the First Presidency had it deleted from the 1912 edition of Roberts's History.[45]

Widtsoe also addressed the doctrine of man. In 1914, Widtsoe further elaborated views expressed in Joseph Smith as Scientist by publishing A Rational Theology, which the Melchizedek priesthood quorum used as a manual. His view that all truth must harmonize led to the position that the gospel expressed "a philosophy of life" which must be in "complete harmony with all knowledge" and "to which all men might give adherence."[46]

Widtsoe also moved to a consideration of the Creation. Without trying to explain the process, he argued that the biblical account of man's creation from the dust of the earth was figurative. The exact method of creation was unknown, and probably at man's current stage of development unknowable. Nor, he said, "is it vital to a clear understanding of the plan of salvation."[47]

His attempt to reconcile science and religion led to the view that the Fall came about through natural law. Thus the account of the Fall was also figurative. In addition, there "was no essential sin" in the Fall, except that an effect follows the violation of any law, whether deliberate or not. Thus, the "so-called curse" on Adam was actually only an opportunity for eternal progression. Indeed, since all beings are bound by eternal laws such as that of free will, Satan himself must be governed by law, and man must be allowed to react freely to temptation.[48]

Agreeing with earlier positions spelled out by Joseph Smith and elaborated by Roberts, Widtsoe argued that man's existence was simply a reflection, however inferior, of God's. Thus, "we must also have a mother who possesses the attributes of Godhood." Sexual relations will continue into eternity both for joy and for procreation.[49]

The most controversial portion of the draft Widtsoe presented to the First Presidency concerned the eternal relationships between God and man. If God had not created the universe or man, man must be co-eternal with God and in fact God himself must be finite and may not always have been God or have existed eternally in the same state. It followed that "the man who progresses through his increase in knowledge and power, becomes a colaborer with God." Thus, God was not "a God of mystery," but rather a being who operated on a different level of advancement than man. Like Roberts, Widtsoe had included a discussion of intelligences, which he said had existed as separate entities before men became spirit beings, and he included an explicit statement that there was a time when there was no God.[50]

This elaboration was simply too much for the First Presidency to accept. On 7 December 1914 Joseph F. Smith, then in Missouri, telegraphed Anthon H. Lund to postpone the publication of Widtsoe's book. Lund called in Edward H. Anderson, who furnished the proof sheets. After reading the discussion of the evolution of God from intelligence to superior being, Lund became disturbed. "I do not," he wrote, "like to think of a time when there was no God." On December 11 Joseph F. Smith had returned from Missouri, and he agreed with Lund.

Changes in the proofs were ordered, and all references to the doctrine of intelligences were eliminated

from this work, just as they had been from Roberts's on the ground that they were merely speculation. In their 1925 statement regarding evolution, the First Presidency again made no statement on the doctrine of intelligences but simply stated that "by his Almighty power God organized the earth, and all that pit contains, from spirit and element, which exist co-eternally with himself."[51]

Some of the attacks on evolutionary theory published by the Church came from the pen of a non-Mormon journalist, J. C. Homans, under the pseudonym Dr. Robert C. Webb. After the Improvement Era Carried a Homans article in the September 1914 issue, Talmage came to see the First Presidency, read the article to them, and with the help of Frederick C. Pack, who had succeeded to the Deseret Chair of Geology at the University of Utah, convinced at least Anthon H. Lund that Homans's arguments were illogical and did not touch the real "pith of evolution."[52]

In January 1915 Talmage again brought a Homans manuscript, this time on the origin of life, to the First Presidency, which they agreed to reject. Lund wrote that they considered the article "abstruse," and failing to "meet points at issue between the old ideas and the Evolutionists." Homans believed that evolutionists held ideas which would kill religion. Unfortunately, Lund thought, he was not willing to deal with the problem of harmonizing the ideas and "truth must harmonize with itself. This is the great problem," he wrote. "It will be solved."[53]

Talmage, Widtsoe, and Roberts gave at least as much effort to considering the doctrine of man as they did the doctrine of God, but their work did not lead to the kind of authoritative statement on man, which had been issued by the First Presidency on God. Several possible reasons for the failure to settle questions regarding man seem plausible. First, it may be that the Church leaders and members generally considered such questions settled by doctrines implicit in the Book of Mormon and other teachings of the period before 1835. Second, it may be that they generally took for granted the doctrines of the King Follett discourse and the progressive theologians. Or, third, it may be that the Church membership never thoroughly considered the implications of the problem.

Given the information available at this point in time, it seems probable that the reason questions were not resolved is a combination of the second and third hypotheses. Basically, concern over the increasing vigor of the theory of evolution through natural selection seems to have overridden all other considerations on the doctrine of man. The First Presidency wanted to see the truths of science and religion reconciled, and much of the work of Talmage, Widtsoe, and Roberts dealt with that challenge. On evolution, for instance, the progressive theologians generally took the view that while evolution itself was a correct principle, the idea of natural selection was not. The First Presidency statements of 1909 and 1925 specifically addressed the problem of evolution and of man's essential nature, which was an important part of Talmage's, Widtsoe's, and Roberts's works.[54]

Because the evolution problem was constantly in the background, it seems apparent that two things happened. First, the Church membership had internalized the implications of the doctrine of eternal progression and assumed that man, as God in embryo, was basically Godlike and that the flesh itself, since it was common to both God and man, posed no barrier to man's perfectibility.

Second, members seem to have held Joseph Smith's statement in the Articles of Faith that God would not punish man for Adam's transgression as equivalent to a rejection of the doctrine of original sin, which held that man inherited a condition of sinfulness. In general, it seemed, the doctrine of absolute free will demanded that any evil which man might do came not because of any predisposition of the flesh but rather as a result of conscious choice.

IV. Some Consequences for Our Time

The long-range consequences of both the success in reconstructing the doctrine of God and the failure to reconstruct the doctrine of man also bear consideration. During the period following World War I, a movement developed in Protestantism which challenged the prevailing modernism and proposed the reestablishment in a more sophisticated form of a theology which returned to the basic teachings of Luther and Calvin emphasizing the sovereignty of God and the depravity of man. Since World War II, a similar movement has taken place in Mormonism which is as notable for its differences from the Protestant movement as for its similarities.[55]

A recent discussion of man by Rodney Turner and George Boyd indicates the scope of this movement with regard to the doctrine of man. While, as Kent Robson pointed out in a critique of the discussion, much of both Turner's neo-orthodox and Boyd's progressive exposition involves contradictory exegesis of the same scriptures and authorities, what is also apparent is that Roberts, Talmage, and Widtsoe play a prominent part in Boyd's view of man while they are conspicuously absent from Turner's.[56]

As O. Kendall White has pointed out, Mormon neo-orthodoxy has not gone as far as the Protestant movement in defining a sovereign God and a depraved man entirely dependent upon grace for salvation. As should be apparent, statements by Joseph Smith, the progressive theologians, and the First Presidency have specifically rejected doctrines such as the absolute sovereignty of God and irresistible grace. In the absence of an authoritative statement by the First Presidency, however, it is still possible to return to the early 1830s

and find a basically sensual and devilish man. Because of the reconstruction of the Mormon doctrine of God, however, what we get today is a rather unsteady neo-orthodoxy lacking the vigor and certitude of its Protestant counterpart, since the progressives amputated two of its legs and seriously weakened the third.

Notes

1. See, for instance, Joseph Fielding McConkie, "A Historical Examination of the Views of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Four Distinctive Aspects of the Doctrine of Deity Taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith." (M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968). pp. 31-32.
2. O. Kendall White, Jr., "The Transformation of Mormon Theology," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 5 (Summer, 1970):9-24; Gordon C. Thomasson and Julian R. Durham. "Thoughts on Mormon 'Neo-orthodoxy," "Ibid., (Winter. 1970): 123-128.
3. Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1902-1935), vols 1 and 2 passim.
4. A Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ (Zion: W. W. Phelps and Co., 1833); Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter-day Saints: Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams, 1935). Both these volumes are photoreproduced in Wilford C. Wood, ed., Joseph Smith Begins His Work, 2 vols (n.p. Wilford C. Wood, 1958, 1962), vol. 2. and I have used this edition. The problem of understanding doctrine at particular times consists not only in determining what was disseminated but also in what contemporary members perceived it to be. Clearly, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and revelations published in the monthlies are the best sources for doctrine as disseminated. One could use diaries, journals, and autobiographies to determine perceptions, but they tend to represent one person's rather than a collective view. This problem might be solved if a larger number of diaries were available for the pre-1835 period. This is, unfortunately, not the case. Autobiographies and journals, particularly if they were written considerably after events, tend to confuse contemporary feelings and earlier perceptions. Thus, the monthlies and doctrinal expositions like the Lectures on Faith since they were meant for public dissemination provide the most reliable sources for contemporary perceptions of doctrine.
5. Marvin S. Hill, "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," BYU Studies 9 (Spring, 1969): 363-65. For a discussion of the differences between Calvinism and Armenianism see James Hastings, ed. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (New York: Scribner's, 1951). 1:809-811.
6. Evening and Morning Star (June, 1932). p. 2; May, 1833. p. 189; (I have used the Kirtland reprint edition throughout); Messenger and Advocate. May, 1835). pp. 122-23; W. A. Cowdery to Editor. March 17, 1835, Messenger and Advocate, May, 1835, p. 113.
7. Alma 18:28, 22:9-12; I Nephi 17:36: Doctrine and Covenants 14:9, 45:1; James R. Clark, Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833-1964. 6 vols., (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 1:27.
8. Milton v. Backman, Jr., Joseph Smith: First Vision: The First Vision in its Historical Context (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), pp. 155-57: Richard P. Howard, Restoration Scriptures. A Study of Their Textual Development (Independence, Mo: Herald House. 1969), pp. 47-48; James B. Allen, "Line Upon Line," Ensign (July 1979): 37-38. In citing scripture, unless there is a major discrepancy between the first editions and the editions currently in use. I have cited the current edition used by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, since the chapter numbers in the Book of Mormon have been changed and there are no verse numbers in the first edition and the section and verse numbers in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants are different than the current edition. It might be argued that the apparent inconsistency of these questions can be resolved since the Lord and God the Father are one in purpose and since God directed while Jesus implemented the creation. This is, however, falling into the trap mentioned in paragraph one of this essay in which current doctrine is used to interpret previously revealed scriptures.
9. Messenger and Advocate, May, 1935, pp. 122-23; D and C. 20:28.
10. D and C (1st ed), pp. 53-54.
11. Sterling M. McMurrin, The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965), p. 49 for the definition. The view presented here of the nature of Mormon doctrine, however, is quite at odds with McMurrin's position.
12. Messenger and Advocate, May, 1835, p. 113.
13. McMurrin, Theological Foundations, pp. 65-66. Again McMurrin would deny this is the case with Mormon doctrine. I suspect that if asked about original sin, most Mormons would say that they do not believe in it and then cite the second Article of Faith. They might not realize that they are also denying that a condition of sinfulness attaches to every person by virtue of his humanness, but if pressed, they would probably say that the statement that men will be punished for their own sins denied the possibility of original sin in either formulation. See also Mosiah 3:16-25; Alma 41:2-15; 42:2-13.
14. Evening and Morning Star (October, 1832), p. 77.
15. Evening and Morning Star (March 1834), p. 283; D and C (1st ed). p.67.
16. Hill, "Mormon Mind," 352-53; Timothy L. Smith, "Righteousness and Hope: The Biblical Culture that Nurtured Early Mormon Faith," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association, Canandaigua, New York, May 2, 1980.
17. Alexander Campbell, A Compend of Alexander Campbell's Theology, ed. Royal Humbert (St. Louis, Mo.: Bethany Press, 1961), pp. 85, 231; Jonathan Crowther, A True and Complete Portraiture of Methodism (New York: Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware, 1813), p. 143, 178.
18. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People 2 vols (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 1:532.

19. Alexander Campbell, Delusions. An Analysis of the Book of Mormon With an Examination of its Internal and External Evidences, and a Refutation of Its Pretences to Divine Authority With Prefatory Remarks by Joshua V. Himes (Boston: Benjamine H. Greene, 1832), pp. 5-7, 12-14; Thomas Campbell in Evangelical Enquirer (Dayton, Ohio, March 7, 1831). 1:235-36; Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate (New Series, 1913), 2:47 says that "The whole book is filled with blasphemous nonsense, silly stories, pretended prophesies, history, &c . . . interlarded with unnumbered profanations of the names of the Deity and Jesus Christ." Niles Weekly Register, July 16, 1831. p. 353 attacks the Church on the basis of miracles and common ownership of property. The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (Brattleboro: Fessenden & Co., 1835). p. 844 Cites "pretensions" and the doctrine of Zion. Campbell, in the Evangelical Enquirer, also objects to the character of Joseph Smith, and the doctrine of authority and rebaptism. In general, however, most of these attacks did not consider the doctrines of God and man deviant. The principal opposition developed against the announcement of new revelations and scripture, and the presentation of these in the names of God and Christ was considered blasphemous.

20. LaRoy Sunderland whose Mormonism Exposed and Refuted (New York: Piercy & Reed 1838). and was also published as a series entitled "Mormonism" in Zion's Watchman between January 13 and March 24. 1838, attacked a number of passages from the Doctrine and Covenants. Sunderland used for his sources the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants (1835 edition) and Parley P. Pratt's Voice of Warning (New York: W. Sandord. 1837). Sunderland attacked Mormonism on an ad hominem basis as many of the others calling the writings "nonsense and blasphemy," p. 35, and he also opposed the rejection of infant baptism as many others did. p. 25. The question of infant baptism, however, was a controversy within Protestantism, and opposition to the Mormons on that basis would not have separated them from the Baptists, for instance. His major substantative attack, however, came on the doctrine of perfectionism mentioned in D & C 76:58 and 88:107 indicating the possibility of man becoming equal with Christ and God (Sunderland p. 35). The problem here is that it is not at all certain that until Parley P. Pratt's reply to Sunderland in Mormonism Unveiled: Zion's Watchman Unmasked, and its editor, Mr. L. R. Sunderland Exposed (New York: Privately Printed, 1838), especially pp. 27 and 31 that these passages and the passages like them in the Bible (Psalms 82:6; John 10:34-36; and 1 John 3:2) would have been interpreted literally. Paul Edwards. "The Secular Smiths," Journal of Mormon History 4 (1977):5 argues that Parley P. Pratt played a central role in developing theology for the Church Robert Matthews, "The 'New Translation' of the Bible, 1830-1833: Doctrinal Development during the Kirtland Era," BYU Studies 11 (Summer 1971): 411-415 points out that many of the revelations between sections 76 and 93 were received in connection with the new translation of the Bible, particularly as Joseph Smith revised the gospel of John and the Book of Revelations. The headnotes for sections 76 and 93, particularly reveal the relationship between these sections and the new translation of the New Testament.

21. Francis H Touchet, "Perfectionism in Religion and Psychotherapy: Or On Discerning the Spirits." Journal of Psychology and Theology (4 (Winter 1976): 25:26; See also Evening and Morning Stat especially after the persecutions in Missouri began, e.g., (January, 1834). p. 256; (March, 1834), p. 283.

22. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard. The Story of the Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 1976). p. 67-68; Joseph Smith said in June, 1844 that the elders had been preaching "plurality of Gods . . . for fifteen years." Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 6:474. This statement does not represent the perception of Church members before 1835. Joseph Smith may have been referring to the rather explicit division between God and Christ in the 1835 Lectures on Faith or to D and C 76:58 which dates from February 1832. It is unclear that members of the Church would have perceived these references as explicit references to the 1844 doctrine.

23. T. Edgar Lyon, "Doctrinal Development of the Church During the Nauvoo Sojourn, 1839-1846," BYU Studies 15 (Summer 1975): 435-466 deals with the broad range of development in Nauvoo; Stan Larson. "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," BYU Studies 18 (Winter 1978): 193-208; Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," Ibid., 209-225. It has been argued that much of the current doctrine of the Church and been well clarified by mid-1833 when Joseph Smith finished his new translation of the Bible--particularly that Jesus was Jehovah of the New Testament and that man had enjoyed a premortal existence as a spirit child of God. See Robert Matthews. "A Plainer Translation" A History and Commentary. (Provo: BYU Press, 1975). pp. 309-313. The problem with this proposition is that it assumes the present Mormon tritheism, which is not at all obvious, particularly in view of the doctrinal exposition of the 1834-35 Lectures on Faith. An interpretation of Genesis 2:5 in the Inspired Version for instance which assumes a premortal spiritual creation also assumes an understanding of the term spirit which may not have existed among the Mormons in 1834. It may simply have meant that God created men intellectually or conceptually which was a contemporary meaning of the term spiritual. (See Oxford English Dictionary, compact edition, p. 2968, meaning no 6) In fact, there is little evidence that a contemporary of Joseph Smith reading what became Moses 3:5-7 in the Pearl of Great Price would have interpreted it as we do today to refer to mankind as the spirit children of God in any corporeal sense. The same problem exists with Doctrine and Covenants 93:29-38. Today, we interpret the term intelligence in those passages to mean the essential uncreated essence of each person. The passage, however discusses intelligence as "the light of truth," which it declares eternal, not as the premortal essence of each individual. It also declares that "The elements are eternal and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fullness of joy. "Until the development of the materialism associated with the King Follett discourse, it is not at all certain that the term spirit would have been construed as in any sense corporeal. The Evening and Morning Star (May. 1834) p. 314 uses the term intelligence to mean facts or information. The use of the term "beginning" would also not necessarily have meant in the presence of God before the creation. See Ether 3.14-17; Mosiah 7:27 In fact, I would argue that contemporary meaning of these terms would have militated against such an interpretation before church leaders began to elaborate on them in 1838. Another problem which I have not addressed in this paper, but which bears consideration, is that of biblical literalism. There is a tendency to see Mormons as biblical literalists. What those who claim this tendency apparently do not see is that biblical literalism is not absolute. In the final analysis biblical interpretation is dependent upon a theological system since some scriptures must be interpreted allegorically. Currently, for instance, the passage cited in note 8 above, indicating the unity of Father and Son, would be interpreted allegorically while those indicating that Christ is the Son of God, "after the manner of the flesh," would be interpreted literally. The system of interpretation which Mormons adopted in 1830 was essentially drawn from contemporary Protestantism. After 1835 that system of interpretation was changed because of the work of those like Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt who elaborated the doctrine of perfectionism into a system of radical materialism.

24. John Corrill, Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . (St. Louis: Privately Printed, 1839). pp. 10, 12-13.

25. Clark, Messages, 1:253; 11:233-40, Journal of Discourses, 1:50-51; 7:299-302: Ronald W. Walker. "The Godbeite Protest in the making of Modern Utah," (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Utah, 1977). p. 183.

26. See for instance, Doctrine and Covenants, 1883 edition, pp. 1, 76; Allen and Leonard. The Story of the Latter-day Saints, p. 383; Parley P. Pratt, Key to the Science of Theology. 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1874), passim; B. H. Roberts, The Gospel: An Exposition of Its First Principles (Salt Lake City: The Contributor. 1888). pp. 212-213.

27. Journal of James E. Talmage, Special Collections, Brigham Young University Library. January 5, 1899; Juvenile Instructor 29 (April 1, 1894); 220; The entire series of lectures was reproduced in ibid., 28 (November 15, 1893) through 29 (August 15, 1894); James E. Talmage. The Articles of Faith: A Series of Lectures on the Principal Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1899). pp. 164-65.

28. Roberts. The Gospel (3rd ed.), pp. vi-vii, 196. The radical nature of Talmage's contribution can be overemphasized. The doctrine of the separate corporeal nature of Christ and God had been well established before the Articles of Faith, and members who believed otherwise would probably have been exceptional by 1893. In addition, Talmage continued to insist on the absolute attributes of God such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence (pp. 42 43) Still as a codification of generally accepted doctrines and as a formulation of the new doctrine of the Holy Ghost it was seminal.

29. Talmage Journal, January 21, 1883, March 15 and May 4, 1884, March 14, 1898, and September 13, 1899; and Improvement Era. February, 1900, p. 256. In this discussion, I have not gone into detail into the controversy over the question of evolution through natural selection since the topic has been so well treated elsewhere. Those interested in considering the topic would do well to see: Duane E. Jeffrey, "Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 8 (Autumn-Winter 1973): 41-75 and Richard Sherlock. "A Turbulent Spectrum: Mormon Reactions to the Darwinist Legacy," Journal of Mormon History 5 (1978): 33-59.

30. John A. Widtsoe, In a Sunlit Land: The Autobiography of John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Milton R. Hunter and G. Homer Durham, 1952). pp. 66-67; Joseph Smith as Scientist. A Contribution to Mormon Philosophy (Salt Lake City: YMMIA General Board, 1908).

31. John A. Widtsoe, Rational Theology as Taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: General Priesthood Committee, 1915). pp. 20-22.

32. Ibid., pp. 45-46.

33. Journal of George F. Richards. LDS Church Archives. March 28, 1911.

34. Joseph F. Smith to Samuel O. Bennion, February 20, 1912, cited in Clark, Messages 4:266; and Journal of Anthon H. Lund, LDS Church Archives, April 8, 1912; Journal of Discourses, 1:50-51.

35. Talmage Journal, September 14, 1914, April 19, 1915, Lund Journal May 4, 6, 1915; Richards Journal, June 15, 24, 1915; Journal of Heber J. Grant, LDS Church Archives, May 18, 20. June 8. 10, 1915; Clark, Messages, 4:399-400; James E. Talmage. Jesus the Christ (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1915).

36. Clark, Messages, 5:23-24.

37. Lund Journal, January 21, 1915: Pratt, Key to the Science of Theology, 5th ed., pp. 68, 75, 97. 100-102, 139; 7th ed., pp. 66, 73, 48, 92-94, 100.

38. Grant Journal, November 15, 1917, August 20, 1921; Talmage Journal, January 3, 1918, March 11, 1921; Richards Journal, March 11. July 29, 1921.

39. Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 2:243-251.

40. Talmage, Articles of Faith, 1st ed., p. 71; 12th ed., pp. 69-70.

41. Ibid., 1st ed., p. 54.

42. Ibid., 1st ed., p. 421; 12th ed., p. 409.

43. Brigham H. Roberts, A New Witness for God (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1895). p. 462.

44. Richards Journal, February 6, 1907; Roberts, New Witness, pp. 457-466 cf. 2ed, 1:458-461. (See especially 1st ed., p. 466; 2ed 1:461.)

45. Lund Journal. August 25, 19, 1911; Donald Q. Cannon. "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective." BYU Studies 18 (Winter 1978): 190-92.

46. Widtsoe, Rational Theology, pp. iii. 3.

47. Ibid., pp. 45-46.

48. Ibid., pp. 46-48. 81.

49. Ibid., pp. 64, 146.

50. Ibid., pp. 56-27, 61-62; Lund Journal, December 7, 11, 1914.

51. Ibid.; Clark, Messages, 5:244.

52. Improvement Era. September, 1914, pp. 1040, 1043-45; Lund Journal. September 22, 1914; Richards Journal. January 20, 21, 1915, Talmage Journal, September 28, 1914.

53. Lund Journal, January 16, 1915.

54. For the statements, see Clark, Messages, 4:199-206; 5:243-44.

55. White, "Mormon Theology," pp. 10-22. Sunstone 5:4/33 (Jul 80)

56. George Boyd, Rodney Turner and Kent Robson, "Roundtable: The Nature of Man," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 3 (Spring 1968): 55-97.