

CHAPTER XIII.¹

ANALYSIS OF MORMON THEOLOGY.

Its origin—A theologic conglomerate—Mythology, Paganism, Mohammedanism, corrupt Christianity and Philosophy run mad—“First principles of the Gospel”—The five points of variance—Materialism—No spirit—A god with “body, parts and passions”—Matter eternal—No “creation”—Intelligent atoms—Preexistent souls—High times in the Spirit Worlds—Birth of Spirits—They hunt for “Earthly Tabernacles”—The “Second Estate”—Apotheosis—The “Third Estate”—“Fourth Estate”—Men become gods—“Divine generation”—Earthly Families and Heavenly Kingdoms—Did Man come from the Sun?—“Building up the Kingdom”—One day as a thousand years—The time of the Gentiles about out—Great events at hand—“Gog and Magog,” et. al.—Gentiles, prepare to make tracks—Return to “Zion,” in Missouri—Christ’s earthly empire—Great destiny for Missouri—Tenets from Christianity—Baptism a “Saving Ordinance”—Baptized twelve times—Office of the Holy Ghost—Strange fanaticism—Eclectic Theology—A personal god—The homoousian and the homoiousian—The Logos and the Aeon—Grossness and Vulgarity.

IN their origin, the Mormons may be said to have been an offshoot from the Campbellites; Sidney Rigdon, the author of their early doctrines, having originally left the Baptists to join the former sect, from which he again seceded and founded a sect in Ohio, locally known as “Disciples.” Of this band a portion went crazy as Millenarians, another part became Perfectionists, and the remainder followed Rigdon when he joined his fortunes with those of Joe Smith, and assisted in founding Kirtland, Ohio. Under the early teachings of Brigham Young they adopted the Methodist order of services. Their missionaries when abroad, at present, first preach principles very similar to those of the Campbellites; and what the Mormons call “the first principles of the gospel” are mainly those of that sect. But it is the smallest part of

¹ Original chapter page numbers: 311-331.

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Mormon theology which has its origin in any recognized Christian system; and by the successive additions of Rigdon, Joe Smith, and Brigham Young, the laborious philosophical speculations of Orson Pratt, and the wild poetical dreams of his brother Parley P. Pratt, it may well be said there is scarcely a known system of religion, ancient or modern, but has contributed some shred of doctrine to Mormonism. It is now beyond the power of man to invent a new religion. At this late day combination is all that is left for the innovator, and the doctrinal points of Mormonism are culled from three different sources, viz.:

I. Christianity, by a literal interpretation of the Bible, particularly the prophecies.

II. Ancient mythology and various modern forms of pagan philosophy.

III. The philosophical speculations of various schools; the whole modified and practicalized by revelation applied to events of daily occurrence.

Thus has grown up a vast and cumbrous system which is the standard Mormon theology, but of which each individual Mormon believes so much or so little as he can comprehend. It were an endless task to pursue these doctrines through all the variations, necessary to force some sort of agreement, and the lifeless application of perverted texts of Scripture. But the distinctive points in which they differ from all Christian sects may be grouped under five heads:

I. Pure materialism; but slightly different from the atomic materialism of the Greek school.

II. The eternity of matter.

III. Pre-existence of the soul, and transmission of spirits.

IV. A plurality of gods.

V. A plurality of wives, or "celestial marriage."

All these are blended in various ways, and depend upon each other in a score of combinations and confused inter-relations; but as far as possible they are treated of separately.

I. The Mormons hold that there is no such thing as spirit distinct from matter; that spirit is only matter refined, and that spirits themselves are composed of purely material atoms, only finer

than the tangible things of earth, as air is finer and more subtle than water, while both are equally material. "The purest, most refined and subtle of all is that substance called the Holy Spirit. This substance, like all others, is one of the elements of material or physical existence, and therefore, subject to the necessary laws which govern all other matter. Like the other elements its whole is composed of individual particles. Each particle occupies space, possesses the power of motion, requires time to move from one part of space to another, and can in nowise occupy two places at once, in this respect differing nothing from all other matter. It is widely diffused among all the elements of space; under the control of the Great Eloheim it is the moving cause of all the intelligences, by which they act. It is omnipresent by reason of the infinitude of its particles, is the control[1]ing element of all others and comprehends all things. By the mandate of the Almighty it performs all the wonders ever manifested in the name of the Lord. Its inherent properties embrace all the attributes of intelligence and affection. In short it is the attributes of the eternal power and Godhead."²

Gods, angels, spirits and men, the four orders of intelligent beings, are all of one species, composed of similar materials, differing not in kind but in degree. God is a perfected man; man is an embryotic or undeveloped god. Orson Pratt has pursued this doctrine to its wildest ultimate, and proves to his own satisfaction that every original atom was endowed with a self-acting, independent intelligence, and they merely "got together" of their own volition. Thus in the attempt to avoid the supposed mystery of an instantaneous creation by the one God, he has raised an infinity of unsolved problems by making every atom a god.

II. The eternity of matter is a logical outgrowth of materialism. In this view every atom now in being has existed from all eternity past and will exist for all eternity to come. There never could have been a "creation," except to appropriate "matter unformed

² BEADLE FOOTNOTE: "The quotations in this chapter are from Parley P. Pratt's 'Key to [the science of] Theology,' a standard work among 19th century Mormons, and by them considered as inspired."

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and void," and change its form, impressing new conditions upon it.

New worlds are constantly being formed of the unappropriated material of the universe, and stocked with spirits, after which faithful Saints rule over them and become *gods*.

III. Closely allied with the last principle is that of the pre-existence of souls; and here we first meet with the sexual principle which underlies all the remaining portion of Mormonism. All the sexual passions exist in full force in the different worlds, and animate the immortal *gods* as fully as their human offspring. Countless millions of spirits are thus born in the eternal worlds, and are awaiting by myriads the physical processes by which they may enter earthly tabernacles and begin their second, or probationary state. "Wisdom inspires the *gods* to multiply their species,"³ and as these spiritual bodies increase, fresh worlds are necessary upon which to transplant them. These spiritual bodies have all the organs of thought, speech and hearing, in exact similitude to earthly senses. But in this state they could not advance; it was necessary for them to be subject to the moral law of earth that regeneration might go on. Hence they "seek earnestly for earthly tabernacles, haunting even the abodes of the vilest of mankind to obtain them." To bestow these tabernacles is the highest glory of woman, and her exaltation in eternity will be in exact proportion to the number she has furnished. Man may preach the gospel, may reach the highest glories of the priesthood, may in time even be a creator; but woman's only road to glory is by the physical process of introducing spirits to earth. Hence the larger her family the greater her glory; any means to prevent natural increase are in the highest degree sinful, and violent means an unpardonable sin.

Of these spirits it is intimated some "did not keep their first estate,"⁴ and are to be thrust down and never permitted to have earthly tabernacles or propagate their species. Those who reach

³ Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool, England: F.D. Richards, 1855), 46.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

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this earth are in their “second estate,”⁵ and if faithful Saints will pass to their “third estate,”⁶ celestialized men, after which they become *gods*.

IV. There is a vast multitude of *gods*, dispersed throughout all the worlds as kingdoms, families and nations. There is, however, but one *god* regnant on each world, who is to the inhabitants of that world the “only true and living God.”⁷ But each *god* having a first born son, there is “One God and One Christ”⁸ to each world. Thus “there are lords many and gods many,”⁹ but to us there is but one God, the Creator of the world and the Father of our spirits, literally begotten. He was once a man of some world and attained His high position by successive degrees. “He is the Father of Jesus Christ in the only way known in nature, just as John Smith, Senior, is the father of John Smith, Junior.”¹⁰

All the *gods* have many wives and become the fathers of the souls of men by divine generation. The *gods* are in the exact form of men, of material substance, but highly refined and spiritualized. A grand council of the *gods*, with a president directing, constitute the designing and creating power; but man, if faithful, will advance by degrees till endowed with the same creative power, or strictly, *formative* will. All faithful Saints will become *gods* and finally have worlds given them to people and govern. All their earthly wives and children will belong to and constitute the beginning of their heavenly kingdom, and they will rule over their increasing posterity forever.

“When the earth was prepared, there came from an upper world a Son of God, with His beloved spouse, and thus a colony

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁸ From Cyprian we read, “*There is one God and one Christ, and one Church, and one chair founded on Peter by the word of the Lord. It is not possible to set up another altar or for there to be another priesthood besides that one altar and that one priesthood. Whoever has gathered elsewhere is scattering*” (circa 250 CE. Paraphrased from 1 Corinthians 8:6).

⁹ Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible – 1 Corinthians 8:5.

¹⁰ Noah Webster, *The Elementary Spelling-Book* (New York, NY: Appleton & Company, 1857), 152.

from Heaven, it may be from the sun, was transplanted on our soil.”¹¹ Joseph Smith is one of the *gods* of this generation and now occupies a high position next to Christ, who in turn stands next to Adam. Above Adam is Jehovah and above Jehovah is Eloheim, who is the greatest *god* of whom we have any knowledge. His residence is in the planet Kolob, near the center of our system, which revolves upon its axis once in a thousand years, which are “with the Lord as one day.”¹² There were six of our days in the first “creation” of this world, and six of the Lord’s days in the great preparation or course of the world, each day lasting a thousand years. There were two of these days to each dispensation. The Patriarchal had two of these days; the Mosaic in like manner a day of rise and a day of decline; the Christian dispensation also had its two days of trial, but, after St. John’s death, a great apostasy began, and for eighteen hundred years the so-called Christian [*sic*] world has been in darkness and there has been no true priesthood upon the earth. There have been no visions, revelations or miraculous gifts from the Lord enjoyed among men. The various sects knew something of the truth but not its fullness; they had the form of godliness but denied the power.

But this time of darkness is nearly completed; the dawn of the Lord’s day is here, and the great Sabbath will soon be ushered in. But a few more years are given to the Gentiles, then the great contest of Gog and Magog will set in, and nearly all the Gentile world be destroyed. Those who remain will become servants to the Saints, who will return and possess the whole land; the widows will come begging the Mormon elders to marry them, and seven women will lay hold of one man. At the same time the remnant left of the Indians, who are descendants of the ancient Jews, will be converted, have the curse removed and become “a

¹¹ Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool, England: F.D. Richards, 1855), 49/paraphrased. Full quote: “*Earth — its mineral, vegetable and animal wealth — its Paradise, prepared, down comes from yonder world on high, a son of God, with his beloved spouse. And thus a colony from heaven, it may be from the sun, is transplanted on our soil.*”

¹² *Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible* — 2 Peter 3:8.

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fair and delightful people.”¹³ The way will be opened to the remainder of the “ten lost tribes,” who are shut up somewhere near the North Pole;¹⁴ old Jerusalem will be rebuilt by all the Jews gathering to the Holy Land, and about the year 1890, the new Jerusalem will be let down from God out of Heaven and located in Jackson County, Missouri, with the corner-stone of the Great Temple “three hundred yards west of the old courthouse in Independence,” where is to be the capital of Christ’s earthly kingdom. The Saints will own all the property of the country, and marry all the women they desire; the streets of their city will be paved with the gold dug by Gentiles from the Rocky Mountains; noxious insects will be banished, contagious diseases cease, the land produce abundantly of grain, flower and fruit, and everything will be lovely in the new Jerusalem!

Leaving the reader to smile or regret, as personal temperament may incline, I hasten to a consideration of the Mormon tenets nominally derived from the Christian Bible. The Mohammedan portion of their faith and practice is reserved for the two succeeding chapters.

The Mormons steadily claim the Bible as the first foundation of their belief; that they “believe all that any Christians do, and a great deal more.” Their tenets most nearly resembling those of Christian sects, and which they call the “First principles of the Gospel,”¹⁵ are four in number, ranked in order of time, as follows:

¹³ *The Eclectic Review* – MDCCCLIII – New Series, Volume VI (London, England: Ward and Company, 1853), 490.

¹⁴ Joseph Smith, Jr. – 3 April 1836, *Visions to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery* (Kirtland, OH: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1836). Doctrine and Covenants 110:11 reads: “After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.”

¹⁵ The term the “First principles of the Gospel” was used in 1805 by Richard Wright in *An Essay on the Necessity and Utility of adhering to the First Principles of Religion* (Wisbech, England: F.B. Wright, 1805), 7.



1. Faith, 2. Repentance, 3. Baptism by immersion, and 4. Laying on of hands for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. They are explained at great length in the "Doctrines and Covenants," the New Testament of Mormonism. This book is made up of revelations, "selected(!) from those of Joseph Smith,"¹⁶ and the doctrinal lectures of various elders, particularly

¹⁶ The exclamation mark (!) following "selected" in Mr. Beadle's statement is significant because the original *Book of Commandments* (1833) contained unaltered versions of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s revelations. In contrast, for the 1835 printing of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, certain revelations underwent modifications or were removed. Consequently, the title page of the 1835 D&C reads: "*Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints: Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God*" (emphasis added). Beadle raises a valid point – if these are indeed revelations from God, why would they require careful selection and editing?

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Sidney Rigdon, with an addition containing the rules and discipline of the Church. The "Lectures on faith and repentance" contain nothing more than is familiar to every attendant on the worship of Arminian sects.¹⁷ Baptism the Mormons regard as "a saving ordinance," of actual and material value; and to such an extent do they carry this doctrine, that they baptize again and again, after every backsliding, and sometimes when there has been a period of "general coldness" in the Church. At the time known in Mormon annals as the "Reformation," when it was supposed the Lord had sent drouth and grasshoppers to punish their backsliding, every adult member of the Church was re-baptized. Nearly all the old members have been baptized two or three times each, and Brigham Young, in one of his sermons, mentions an old reprobate who had been baptized no less than twelve times, and "cut off thirteen times for lying."¹⁸ Brigham himself, who was then much addicted to liquor, seems to have fallen under the power of his enemy soon after uniting with the Church, thus rendering re-baptism necessary; and a quiet joke is current among the less reverent Saints, to the effect that a noted Jew, named Seixas, then connected with the Mormons, jocosely proposed to "leave him in over night."

But the fourth tenet opens to view the whole of their divergence from Christian sects. The prime principle in their faith which marks this departure is, that the office of the Holy Ghost had been unknown on earth from the death of the last Apostle to the calling of Joseph Smith; that the "mystic power" mentioned by St. John, had warred with the Saints and overcome them; that the true priesthood was then taken from the earth, and men, blindly seeking the truth, divided into six hundred and sixty-six sects, "the number of the beast," each having a little truth, but none holding it in purity.

Joseph Smith, earnestly calling upon the Lord to know which of the sects was in the right, was told that all were alike gone astray, and was himself ordained by heavenly messengers, first to

¹⁷ These lectures have been removed from the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

¹⁸ *Re-baptism* was performed regularly in the 19th century, but the practice has since been abandoned.

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the Aaronic and afterwards to the Melchisedec priesthood. Thenceforth the Holy Ghost was to be given to all true believers; the “witness of the spirit” was to be an absolute certainty, and all who had truly embraced the new gospel were “to know for themselves, and without a shadow of doubt” that it was true. How strange and yet how natural, this constant seeking by man for certainty as to the affairs of the unseen world! Hundreds of times I have listened to the testimony of individual Mormons: “You believe you are right—I know this religion is true. We have a witness no other people can have—the gift of the Holy Ghost. In the old churches we always had our doubts; now we know the correctness of this doctrine.” Thus for a season. But man was not made for such absolutism; it is folly to seek a perfect certainty in that which is from its very nature intangible and uncertain, and it will often be found that the wildest and most unreasoning faith has the most obstinate devotees. It is sufficient comment upon the above “testimony,” to state the facts that no church ever organized has developed so many factions in so short a time as Mormonism; that the original organization has, from time to time, given rise to twenty-five sects, of which half-a-dozen are still in existence; that of all who have ever embraced Mormonism, over seventy per cent. have apostatized, and that at the present writing, two powerful schisms are raging in the very bosom of the Church.

At the same time with the Holy Ghost, all the “gifts” of the first Church were to be restored; prophecy, healing, miracles, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues were to accompany the new gospel and be its powerful witnesses among men. Hence, all the miracles which have followed the Latter-day work. The Mormons are fond of quoting that text where all power is given to the Church, and the enumeration of gifts with the statement, “These signs shall follow them that believe.”¹⁹ They then triumphantly exclaim, “Where is the professed Christian Church which has, or even claims these gifts? We have them in their fullness, and this is our testimony that we are truly of the Lord.” As far as human testimony can prove anything on such a

¹⁹ *Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible* – Mark 16:17.

subject, they prove numerous “miracles” in the way of healing various ailments; but I have heard of none that cannot be readily accounted for from the effects of a “fervent and fooling faith.” The most common “miracle” is the cure of rheumatism and neuralgia by “laying on of hands,” and anointing with holy oil. The general rule of the Church is to send for the nearest elders and bishops as soon as a Saint is taken sick; they “lay on hands,” and anoint the patient with “consecrated oil,” rubbing it briskly on the parts most affected.²⁰ If the patient grows worse, other dignitaries are sent for, more vigorous prayers are offered up, and strenuous efforts made to arouse the “healing virtue;” but generally a physician is the last resort, a religious prejudice prevailing to some extent against the profession. A resident physician of Salt Lake City informed me that he was once called to see a woman in labor, who had been suffering for twenty-four hours, and was literally “greased from head to foot with the consecrated oil.” It proved to be a very simple and by no means unusual case, which he relieved in a few minutes, at the very time the attendant women were emptying a large horn of “consecrated oil” upon the patient’s head; the relief was followed by loud praises of the efficacy of the “holy oil,” and the woman is now a firm witness of the “miracle.”

“Speaking in tongues” is not, as one would naturally suppose, the gift of speech in the vernacular of various nations, such as attended the pentecostal season. That would be altogether too linguistic and practical for these latter days. It consists merely of uttering a rapid succession of articulate and connected sounds, not understood by the speaker himself, but which are explained by some one having the “interpretation of tongues.” The mode is for the person who thinks himself endowed with this gift to “stand up, call upon the Lord in silent prayer for a few moments, then open the mouth and utter whatever words come to hand and the Lord will make them a language.” An interpreter will then be

²⁰ Initially, the church instructed the *direct* application of consecrated oil to an ailment, including open wounds. However, upon realizing that this approach could potentially spread disease and, in some instances, lead to fatal outcomes, the church now opts for a more cautious practice—applying only a single drop of oil to the crown of the head of the afflicted believer, prior to receiving a blessing.

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provided and the hidden meaning made plain; but no person ever has both gifts.

This gift prevailed to a surprising extent among certain fanatical sects in England, and was there charitably attributed to an abnormal condition of the organs of language; but here is more naturally accounted for either by imposture or the effects of a wild fanaticism. I heard it but once, and then merely repeated by a devoted Mormon as he had heard the “gifted” deliver it, and, in a philological inquiry, I should pronounce it a cognate branch of that “dog-latin” which belongs to the erudition of school-boy days. This exercise is a little too ridiculous, even for the Mormons at present, and is rarely heard of; but in the early years of their Church it was a frequent occurrence, whole days of “speaking meetings” being devoted to it. An old apostate, who was in the Church at Nauvoo, tells me of having been present at one of those meetings where the first doubts began to arise in his mind in regard to his new faith. Having formerly been a trader among the Choctaws, he suddenly arose and delivered a lengthy speech on hunting in the language of that tribe, which the interpreter rendered into a glowing and florid account of the glories to result from the completion of the Great Temple, then in progress. Lieutenant Gunnison, in his admirable work, gives an account of one lad who had become so noted in the “interpretation of tongues” that he was generally called upon by the elders in the most difficult cases, and seems to have felt under obligation to give some sort of rendering and meaning to any speech, however crude or whimsical. On one occasion, a woman, with the “gifts of tongues,” suddenly rose in the meeting, and shouted, “*O mela, meli, melee!*” The boy was at once pressed for an interpretation, and promptly gave the rendition, “O my leg, my thigh, my knee!” He was cited before the Council for his profanity, but stoutly maintained that his interpretation was “according to the spirit,” and was released with an admonition.²¹

Miss Eliza Snow, the Mormon poetess, was particularly “gifted” in tongues; and, according to the account of young Mormons,

²¹ Lieut. John Williams Gunnison, *The Mormons, or, Latter-Day Saints, in the valley of The Great Salt Lake* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1852), 74.

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now apostatized, she was accustomed often during their early journeyings, to rush into the dwelling of some other woman, exclaiming: "Sister, I want to bless you!" lay her hands upon the other's head,²² and pour forth a strain of confused jargon, which was supposed to be a blessing in the "unknown tongue." Such are the various "gifts," and to a people less blinded by fanaticism, their practical effects among the Mormons would be sufficient to disprove the claim for their divine origin. To mention but one: it is evident to any intelligent observer that numerous deaths occur annually in Salt Lake City simply from a disregard of hygienic laws and a lack of proper medical treatment, with a blind reliance upon treatment by "faith;" and, notwithstanding their splendid climate, the death-rate of the Mormons is unusually large from those very classes of disease for which any intelligent physician can afford immediate relief. It is a remarkable fact that more women die in child-birth in Salt Lake City than in any other of the same size in America, and that for many years the death-rate of infants was only exceeded by one Southern State, Louisiana.²³

So much for their theology as it relates to earth; I have not been able to discover the exact source of their ideas of heaven. They hold that there are three heavens: the celestial, terrestrial and telestial,²⁴ typified by the sun, moon and stars. The last two are for those who have neither obeyed nor disobeyed the gospel; some because they did not hear it, others from "invincible ignorance," and still others because they were morally hindered in various ways. To one or the other of these heavens all sincere people of whatever race or creed, who have never heard the Gospel, but followed the light they had, will be admitted, and there enjoy as much happiness as they are capable of. But if they have once heard the true Gospel and refused to obey it, have persecuted the Saints or apostatized and lost the spirit of God, "this testimony will go with them through all eternity, and they can never

²² In the early days of Mormonism, women were typically responsible for performing healing blessings.

²³ In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, individuals deeply committed to their religious beliefs, spanning various faiths, often harbored reservations or concerns regarding science and medicine.

²⁴ The word "telestial" is an invention of Joseph Smith, Jr.

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enter a rest." Their final destiny, however, is not revealed to mortals. Woman, in and of herself, could never progress to the highest place, "As Eve led Adam out of the garden he must lead her back." If she wilfully remain single and slights the great duty imposed upon her, she is useless in the economy of creation, and therefore is condemned. But many special provisions are made for the really worthy of both sexes, by which the living may vicariously atone for the dead who never heard the Gospel. Baptism for the dead, and marriage for the dead, are chief among these means. The former they found upon St. Paul's writings,²⁵ and under its provisions the Saint is often baptized for some relative who died many years before in Europe, or for some eminent personage. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson are thus vicariously Members of the Mormon Church.

The celestial heaven is theirs only who have both heard and obeyed the Gospel. In that happy state they enjoy all that made this life desirable; they eat, drink and are merry; they are solaced by the embraces of their earthly wives, and many more will be given them; all material enjoyments will be free from the defects of earth, and pleasures will never pall. In time the most faithful will become gods.

"They will ever look upon the elements as their home; hence the elements will ever keep pace with them in all the degrees of progressive refinement, while room is found in infinite space:

"While there are particles of unorganized element in nature's store-house:

"While the trees of paradise yield their fruits, or the fountain of life its river:

"While the bosoms of the gods glow with affection. While eternal charity endures, or eternity itself rolls its successive ages, the heavens will multiply, and new worlds and more people be added to the kingdom of the Fathers."²⁶

But there is still another class of persons who do not quite live up to their privileges, and yet deserve a salvation. Unmarried

²⁵ First Corinthians 15:29: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

²⁶ Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool, England: F.D. Richards, 1855), 46-47.

men and women, and those guilty of various derelictions make up this class. They will never progress, but be *angels* merely; messengers and servants to those worthy of greater glory; and “bachelor angels” only, with no families, and compelled to go through eternity without a mate.

Amusement and disgust possess us by turns as we pursue these blasphemous speculations in regard to the employment of the gods, or the vain attempt to supply those points of knoweldge [*sic*] which Infinite Wisdom has left unrevealed. In this attempt the Mormons might well be styled eclectic theologians. They are Christians in their belief in the New Testament, and the mission of Christ; Jews in their temporal theocracy, tithing and belief in prophecy; Mohammedans in regard to the relations of the sexes, and Voudoos or Fetichists [*sic*], in their witchcraft, good and evil spirits, faith doctoring and superstition. From the Boodhists they have stolen their doctrines of apotheosis and development of gods; from the Greek mythology their loves of the immortals and spirits; they have blended the ideas of many nations of polytheists, and made the whole consistent by outdoing the materialists. In the labor of harmonizing all this with Christianity, there is scarcely a schism that has ever rent the Christian world, but has furnished some scraps of doctrine. They are Arians in making Christ a secondary being in the Godhead—“the greatest of created things and yet a creature;” they are Manicheans in their division of the universe between good and evil spirits, and Gnostics in their gross ascription of all human indulgences and enjoyments, even polygamy, to the Saviour. Of the modern sects, they have the order of service, “experience meetings” and “witness of the spirit” of the Methodists; the “first principles” of the Campbellites, and the “universal suffrage” of the Presbyterians; while their views on baptism, the “perseverance of the Saints,” backsliding and restoration, read like a desperate attempt to combine the doctrines of the Campbellites, Methodists, and Cumberland Presbyterians. Finally, they are Millenarians in their speedy expectation of Christ’s earthly reign; almost Universalists in the belief that a very small portion of mankind will finally fail of any heaven; Spiritualists in their faith that the unseen powers produce special and actual visible effects on earth, though by natural laws,

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and Communists in their system of public works. But it is in regard to the personality and life of Christ that their ideas seem most strange and blasphemous. They hold that He was the literally begotten, that he had five wives while upon earth, two of whom were Martha and Mary, and thus actually violated the law under which He lived; at the same time they vaguely unite the views of the Greek and Latin Fathers, holding Him both the *Logos* and the *Aeon*, the Mediator and the God-man.

The question which for five centuries agitated the early Church as to the personality of Christ, the *homoousian* and the *homoiousian*, the "same substance" or the "similar substance," can have no place in their theology; they have boldly evaded it by obliterating all distinction, either in form, substance or development, between God and man; both are alike material and differ only in degree. Met at the outset by the difficulty of comprehending God, they simplified it by making their Deity a "perfected man." This part of their theology, then, as far as it is the result of earnest and sincere thought on the part of its devotees, merely presents itself to my mind as another one of the ten thousand schemes of man to get away from that dogma which must be received on faith, simply because it is utterly beyond the grasp of finite reason. For nearly two thousand years the Christian Church has presented for the world's acceptance a Being, not all of earth, not all of heaven, yet perfect earth and perfect heaven; has asked the world to believe in the God-Man, the Divine-Human, the humanly inexplicable mystery of "God made manifest in the flesh." But man is unable of his own reason alone to receive this truth; and there is an intense desire in the natural mind to know more of God and hidden things personally, to see or hear them face to face. Man would pry into the hidden mysteries of Providence, which we are told "the angels desired to look into and were not able;"²⁷ at the same time the carnal mind is unwilling to use the appointed means whereby only this knowledge may be obtained; to study the written Word, to do the works

²⁷ See 1 Peter 1:12. Additionally, "and were not able" comes from the book *Elucidation of the sublime genius and theosophian mission of William Law*, "An outline of the qualifications, etc. for the biography of the late Rev. William Law, A.M." (London, England: Private Circulation, 1856), 35.

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therein commanded, and rise to that degree of moral purity by which alone his conception of unseen things can be heightened and made harmonious. He would be gross, sensual and earthy; and at the same time comprehend the pure and heavenly. The two are incompatible. Hence, dissatisfied with his own condition and without the moral energy to amend it, discontented with the truth offered yet unwilling to take the required course to gain more truth, he seeks for some shorter, easier way, some method more consonant with a corrupt nature, to satisfy his mind and perhaps quiet an awakened conscience. This natural feeling of the human mind is seized upon by impostors, sometimes “the man with a purpose,”²⁸ and sometimes the dupe of their own fancies; and hence from age to age the ten thousand short lived sects, diverging now to the intensely material and again to the ultra spiritual, but still departing from the great central line of the Church. In our own day, Spiritualism complains that the Church is too material, too earthy and secular; that man finds therein no supply for the wants of his spiritual nature, and they seek therefor a corrective: the Mormons, diverging to the opposite extreme, complain that the Church is too speculative and mystical, too much given up to the vague and intangible; that their God “without body, parts or passions”²⁹ is too far removed from human sympathy, and for this they would find a corrective in the most intense materialism. And this reaction once begun, the only limit or law to filthy imagination, is the range or power of human fancy. The gross familiarity with which fanatics of all kinds speak of the Supreme Being, the Mormon claim of the office of the Holy Ghost, their polygamy, incest and blood atonement, are a necessary and logical result of this degrading conception of spiritual things. Nowhere through the long detail of their tenets is purity taught or hinted at.³⁰ It is all pure selfishness, mere grossness, sexualism deified and the domain of the senses made the empire of the universe. The Being, in whose sight “the heavens are not

²⁸ William Adams, *The Elements of Christian Science* (Philadelphia, PA: H. Hooker, 1850), 361.

²⁹ *Sermons – Tracts in controversy* (Yorkshire, England, 1776), 125.

³⁰ This is overstated. While the church did teach, publish, and apply the topic, the emphasis on *purity* in Mormonism notably intensified during the 20th century.

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clean,”³¹ who “put no trust in His servants and charged His angels with folly,”³² who is far above all taint of earthliness, has no place in such a system. They have degraded the human conception of Deity, till He has become in their minds “altogether such a one as themselves.”³³ The heathen philosophers of two thousand years ago, with only the unaided light of reason, were infinitely their superiors; and Plato’s Deity is as much more worthy of our adoration than Brigham’s, as the loftiest conceptions of a refined and virtuous philosopher are above the impure imaginations of a sensualist.

³¹ *Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible* – Job 15:15.

³² *Ibid.*, 4:18.

³³ John Bunyan (1628 – 31 August 1688), *The Whole Works of John Bunyan* (London, England: Blackie and Son, 1862), 628.