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Evidence of Divine Inspiration in Joseph Smith Derived from the Prophet's Teaching in Regard to the Extent of the Universe, Man's Place in it and His Doctrine Respecting the Gods—Concluded

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CHAPTER XXXI.

EVIDENCE OF DIVINE INSPIRATION IN JOSEPH SMITH DERIVED FROM THE PROPHET'S TEACHING IN REGARD TO THE EXTENT OF THE UNIVERSE, MAN'S PLACE IN IT AND HIS DOCTRINE RESPECTING THE GODS—CONCLUDED.

We are to turn now from the contemplation of the universe to consider man's place in it, and the doctrine in relation to the Gods as taught by Joseph Smith.

Whether man be viewed from the standpoint of his relationship to other animals, the beauty and majesty of his physical organism, the superiority of his intellectual endowments, or the sublimity of his spiritual aspirations, something will be found in each that argues for him a special place in the universe. It is true that many animals in their physical organism are stronger than man; some are swifter; others keener of sight or smell, and still others are of more acute hearing; but in none is there found that combination which renders man superior to them all. Which of the animals, however strong, or fierce, has he not subdued? Some yield their strength, and others their speed to serve him; others still please him with their beauty, or yield a useful product for his comfort; while all pay him homage by yielding to his sway.

Nor has man been content with obtaining dominion over the animal creation alone. Gradually he is mastering the elements and extending his dominion over all the earth. The winds and ocean currents have long been his servants; the lightning bears his messages; the element of fire is made to serve him in a thousand ways; steam propels his chariot;

distance he well nigh annihilates; he weighs the earth in his balances; measures the distances of the sun and the stars, tells the substances of which they are composed and the mathematical laws by which they are governed. As one thus even partially reviews man's achievements and considers the mastery he has obtained alike over the animal creation and the forces of nature—with the poet he exclaims: "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a God! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

Well might the Psalmist say—addressing himself to God: "What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the Son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet."^a

These favors granted to man by the Creator, no less than his superiority to all other creatures of earth, proclaim for him a special place in the universe; and according to the teachings of Joseph Smith, both the superiority of his endowments and the special favors that he enjoys, arise out of his relationship to the Deity.

The prophet taught that the spirits of men before they tabernacled in bodies of flesh and bone on this earth had an existence with God in another world; that God is the Father of their spirits, Jesus Christ being the first-born.^d That existence was a tangible one; it involved the realities of life in the heavenly kingdom or family. Each spirit there was as much an entity as each man is in this present life. Each spir-

^a Psalm viii.

^b Doc. and Cov. Sec. xciii.

it there had its agency as each man has it here; and was at liberty to take that course he elected to pursue.^c "At the first organization in heaven," says the prophet, "we were all present, and saw the Savior chosen and appointed and the plan of salvation made, and we sanctioned it."

Some spirits went so far in the exercise of their agency as to rebel against God. Lucifer, the "Light Bearer," the "Son of the the Morning," did so, and drew away with him one-third of the hosts of heaven, and they became the devil and his angels.^d This is not only the teaching of Joseph Smith, but also of the Bible.^e

One thing, however, Joseph Smith taught which, as far I know, the Bible does not teach, viz., that these spirits in their pre-existent estate attained unto a variety of degrees of intelligence and nobility of character. In the Book of Abraham, quoted in my last chapter, it is written:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was: and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said, These I will make my rulers, for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me, Abraham, thou art one of them, thou wast chosen before thou wast born."^f

How beautiful is this doctrine! how reasonable! how many problems it explains! What light it throws upon the life and character of man! Notwithstanding the great influence of parentage and environment upon character, we may understand now how it is that in spite of indifferent parentage and vicious environments some characters arise

^c Doc. and Cov. Sec. xciii: 29-31.

^d Doc. and Cov. Sec. xxix: 36-38; also Pearl of Great Price, p. 15 (1907 edition).

^e See Rev. xii: 7-12. II Peter ii: 4. Jude vi.

^f Pearl of Great Price, p. 65.

that are truly virtuous and great, and that purely by the strength of that intelligence and nobility to which their spirits had attained in the heavenly kingdom before they took bodies upon earth. Their grandeur of soul could not all be suppressed by environment in this life, however inauspicious for their development. As the sun struggles through clouds and mists that at times obscure his brightness, so these spirits, stirred by their innate nobility, breaking through all disadvantages attendant upon ignoble birth and iron fortune, rise to their native heights of true greatness.

If a wider survey be taken of mankind, and those advantages and disadvantages under which whole generations, nations and races of men have lived be taken into account; if the fact of their pre-existence be considered in connection with that other fact that the spirits of men before coming to this earth were of unequal intelligence and of every degree of nobility; if it be remembered that in that pre-existent state all spirits had a free agency, and that they there manifested all degrees of fidelity to truth and righteousness, from those who were valiant for the right to those who were utterly untrue to it and rebelled against God; if it be further remembered that doubtless in this earth-life these spirits are rewarded for their faithfulness and diligence in that pre-existent state—if all this, I say, be considered, much that has perplexed many noble minds in their effort to reconcile the varied circumstances under which men have lived with the justice and mercy of God, will disappear.

The doctrine of the pre-existence of spirits, as also their relationship to Deity, is beyond all doubt a scriptural doctrine; but it seems to have been reserved for the Prophet Joseph Smith to give clearness and force to it. The fatherhood of God, and its necessary corollary, the brotherhood of man, are trite phrases much in fashion in these modern days;

but it is questionable if they have conveyed to the minds of men any definite ideas of the actual relationship of father and son existing between man and Deity. In the mouths of sectarians the phrases under discussion have always been employed to express some mystic or indefinite relationship not clearly explained or explainable. It was reserved, I repeat, for the great modern prophet to give these phrases reality. He declared the relationship to be as real as that existing between any father and son on earth; that man's spirit was actually the offspring of Deity—"A spark struck from his own eternal blaze." With him the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man were not mere abstractions more or less beautiful, but a reality. The words taught by the Savior of men to his disciples as the proper mode of address to Deity—"Our Father, who art in heaven"—are not meaningless verbiage, but express the true relationship of man and God.

Inspired by these teachings a disciples at Nauvoo, seventy years ago, composed and the Saints still sing the following invocation to the Heavenly Father and Mother :

O my Father, thou that dwellest
 In the high and glorious place!
 When shall I regain thy presence,
 And again behold thy face?
 In thy holy habitation,
 Did my spirit once reside:
 In my first primeval childhood,
 Was I nurtured near thy side.

For a wise and glorious purpose
 Thou hast placed me here on earth,
 And withheld the recollection
 Of my former friends and birth;
 Yet oft-times a secret something
 Whispered, "You're a stranger here;"
 And I felt that I had wandered
 From a more exalted sphere.

I had learned to call thee Father,
 Through thy Spirit from on high;
 But, until the Key of Knowledge
 Was restored, I knew not why.
 In the heavens are parents single?
 No; the thought makes reason stare!
 Truth is reason; truth eternal
 Tells me I've a mother there.

When I leave this frail existence,
 When I lay this mortal by,
 Father, Mother, may I meet you
 In your royal court on high?
 Then, at length, when I've completed
 All you sent me forth to do,
 With your mutual approbation
 Let me come and dwell with you."^f

The pre-existence of man's spirit and its relationship to Deity having been disposed of, I must now refer to the prophet's teaching on the subject of man's future existence and the possibilities which lie before him in the course of the eternities.

Joseph Smith taught the literal resurrection of the body, and its immortality. He declared that the same sociability which exists among us here will exist among us in that future life, only it will be coupled with eternal glory which now we do not enjoy.^g On one occasion he said:

"I will tell you what I want. If tomorrow I shall be called to lie in yonder tomb, in the morning of the resurrection let me strike hands with my father and cry, 'My father,' and he will say, 'My son, my son!' * * * Would you think it strange if I related what I have seen in vision in relation to this interesting

^f The hymn was composed by Eliza R. Snow Smith, wife of the prophet.

^g Doc. and Cov. Sec. lxxxviii: 26-34; see also Sec. lxxvi and cxxx.

theme? Those who have died in Jesus Christ may expect to enter into all that fruition of joy, when they come forth, which they possessed or anticipated here. So plain was the vision that I actually saw men before they had ascended from the tomb, as though they were getting up slowly. They took each other by the hand, and said to each other: 'My father, my son, my mother, my daughter, my brother, my sister.' And when the voice calls for the dead to arise, suppose I am laid by the side of my father, what would be the first joy of my heart? To meet my father, my mother, my brother, my sister; and when they are by my side, I embrace them and they me. * * * The expectation of seeing my friends in the morning of the resurrection cheers my soul and makes me bear up against the evils of life. It is like their taking a long journey, and on their return we meet them with increased joy."^h

The prophet also taught that the relationships formed in this life were intended to be eternal, not excluding that of husband and wife, with all its endearing affections. He taught that the marriage covenant which binds man and woman as husband and wife should be made for eternity, and not until "death doth them part." To be made for eternity, however, the marriage covenant must be entered into with that object in view, and sealed and ratified by God's authority on earth—even by the holy priesthood, that authority which binds on earth and in heaven, in time and in eternity; which also looses on earth and in heaven—in time and in eternity. Otherwise such covenants are of no efficacy, virtue or force in and after the resurrection from the dead. The house of God is a house of order, and it useless to hope that covenants made until death shall overtake that contracting parties will endure in eternity; or that covenants entered into for eternity, unless sealed by the authority of God, will be of binding force in and after the resurrection from the dead.

^h History of Joseph Smith, Millennial Star, Vol. xxi, p. 6.

I wish to be perfectly understood here. Let it be remembered that the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that man, that is, his spirit, is the offspring of Deity; not in any mystical sense, but actually; that man has not only a Father in heaven, but a Mother also. And when I say that the prophet taught that the resurrection is a reality, that the relationship of husband and wife is intended to be eternal, together with all its endearing affections, I mean all that in its most literal sense. I mean that in the life to come man will build and inhabit, eat, drink, associate and be happy with his friends; and that the power of endless increase will contribute to the power and dominion of those who attain by their righteousness unto these privileges.

What a revelation is here! As I have remarked elsewhere:[†] Instead of the God-given power of procreation being one of the chief things that is to pass away, it is one of the chief means of man's exaltation and glory in that great eternity, which like an endless vista stretches out before him! Through it man attains to the glory of the endless increase of eternal lives, and the right of presiding as priest and patriarch, king and lord over his ever increasing posterity. Instead of the commandment, "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth," being an unrighteous law, it is one by means of which the race of the Gods is perpetuated, and is as holy and pure as the commandment, "Repent and be baptized." Through that law, in connection with an observance of all the other laws of the gospel, man will yet attain unto the power of the Godhead, and like his Father—God—his chief glory will be to bring to pass the eternal life and happiness of his posterity.

If anyone shall say that such views of the life to come are too materialistic; that they smack too much of earth and

[†] Outlines of Ecclesiastical History, p. 435.

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. And those relations and associations which have contributed so much to man's true progress and refinement in this world may be trusted not to degrade him in the life that is to come. On the contrary, with all the affections chastened, with all the qualities of the mind improved, and the attributes of the soul strengthened, we may reasonably hope that what has done so much for man in this life will contribute still more abundantly to his happiness, his exaltation and glory in the life which is to come.

One other point I must not omit to mention. I know how like sacrilege it sounds in modern ears to speak of man becoming a deity. Yet why should it be so considered? Man is the offspring of God, he is of the same race and has within him—undeveloped, it is true—the faculties and attributes of his Father. He has also before him an eternity of time in which to develop both the faculties of the mind and the attributes of the soul—why should it be accounted a strange thing that at last the child shall arrive at the same exaltation and partake of the same intelligence and glory with his Father? If Jesus Christ, “being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,”ⁱ why should it be considered blasphemous to teach that man by faith and righteousness in following the counsels of God, shall at last become like him, and share his power and glory, being a God, even a son of God?

I grant you the height from our present position looks

ⁱ Philippians ii: 6.

tremendous; yet it is not impossible of attainment, since we have eternity in which to work. Stand by the cradle of a new-born babe and contemplate it. Within that little body of organized pulp—with eyes incapable of distinguishing objects; legs unable to bear the weight of its body—without the power of locomotion; hands over whose movements it has no control; ears that hear but cannot distinguish sounds; a tongue that cannot speak—yet within that helpless little tabernacle, what powers lie dormant! Within that germ in the cradle are latent powers which only require time for their unfolding to astonish the world. From it may come the man of profound learning who shall add something by his own wisdom to the sum-total of human knowledge. Perhaps from that germ will come a profound historian, a poet or eloquent orator to sway the reason and passions of men, and guide them to better and purer things than they have yet known. Or a statesman may be there in embryo; a man whose wisdom shall guide the destiny of the state or perhaps with God-like power rule the world! If from such a germ as this in the cradle may come such an unfolding of power as we see in the highest and noblest manhood may it not be that taking that highest and noblest manhood as the germ, that from it may come, under the guiding hand of our Father in heaven, a still more wonderful unfolding, until the germ of the highest and noblest manhood shall develop into a Deity? The distance between the noblest man and the position of God is greater, perhaps, than that between the infant in the cradle and the highest development of manhood; but if so, there is a longer time—eternity—in which to arrive at the result; and God and heavenly influences instead of human parents and earthly means to bring to pass the necessary development.

This doctrine makes very clear some of the sayings of

the scripture, "Now are we the sons of God," said the Apostle John, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he [Christ] shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is; and every man who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."^k We can see now some meaning in the exhortation of Jesus—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."^l "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."^m

All these sayings give us reason to believe that man may become as Christ and God are; that he may walk in their footsteps, become like them and inherit the same glory with them. The Prophet Joseph Smith corrected the idea that God that now is was always God:

"We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity, I will refute that idea, and will take away the vail so that you can see. * * * It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did. * * * The scriptures inform us that Jesus said: 'As the Father hath power in himself, even so hath the Son power—to do what? Why, what the Father did. The answer is obvious—in a manner, to lay down his body and take it up again. Jesus, what are you going to do? To lay down my life, as my Father did, and take it up again. Do you believe it? If you do not believe it, you do not believe the Bible.' * * * God him-

^k I Epistle John iii: 2, 3.

^l Matt. v: 48.

^m Rev. iii: 21.

ⁿ The argument here made by the prophet is very much strengthened by the following passage: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he (the Father) doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." St. John v: 19.

self was once as we are now, and is an exalted Man and sits enthroned in yonder heavens. That is the great secret. If the vail was rent today and the great God who holds the world in its orbit, and upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible—I say were you to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves, in all the person, image and very form as a man, for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from and walked and talked, and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another.”

“ * * * Here, then, is eternal life—to know that only wise and true God, and you have got to learn how to become Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you—namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one, from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power.”^o

But if God the Father was not always God, but came to his present exalted position by degrees of progress as indicated in the teachings of the prophet, how has there been a God from all eternity? The answer is that there has been and there now exists an endless line of Divine Intelligences—Deities, stretching back into the eternities, that had no beginning and will have no end. Their existence runs parallel with endless duration, and their dominions are as limitless as boundless space. These truths led one of the disciples^p of the prophet to write :

If you could hie to Kolob,
In th' twinkling of an eye,
And then continue onward,
With that same speed to fly,

^o From a discourse preached by Joseph Smith at Nauvoo, April 7th, 1844. *Millennial Star*, Vol. xxiii, pp. 245-248.

^p This was W. W. Phelps, the author of many of the Latter day Saint hymns.

D'ye think that you could ever,
 Through all eternity,
 Find out the generation
 Where Gods began to be?

Or see the grand beginning,
 Where space did not extend?
 Or view the last creation,
 Where Gods and matter end?

Methinks the Spirit whispers—
 "No man has found 'pure space,'
 Nor seen the outside curtains
 Where nothing has a place.

"The works of God continue,
 And worlds and lives abound;
 Improvement and progression
 Have one eternal round."

These conceptions of man's origin and future development and glory involve the idea of a plurality of Gods—a doctrine somewhat startling, perhaps, to modern ears, since men in our times have been taught to look upon it as sacrilege to speak or think of more than one God. But since modern Christianity finds itself so far separated from other truths of the gospel, may it not find itself wrong in this? What means that expression in Genesis where, speaking of the creation of man, God is represented as saying: "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness?"⁹ Is it not a fair inference that he addressed himself to other divine personages who were present? In the account of the creation given in the Book of Abraham the plural is used throughout—"And the Gods prepared the earth to bring forth the living creatures." "And the Gods took counsel among

⁹ Gen. i: 26.

themselves and said, 'Let us go down and form man in our image, after our likeness,' " etc.

Passing by many other expressions in the Old Testament that convey the idea of the existence of a plurality of Gods, I take up the preface to the gospel according to St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." It is generally conceded that the "Word" here spoken of as being with God in the beginning is Jesus Christ. If any doubt existed that Jesus referred to, it would be dispelled by the fourteenth verse of the same chapter, in which the preface occurs: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

Here, then, at least is an account of two Gods—one of which dwelt with the other in the beginning, and one—the Word—afterwards came to earth, was made flesh and dwelt on earth with men and was known as Jesus of Nazareth.

When Jesus—the Word—was baptized in Jordan, as he came out of the water, the heavens opened, the Spirit of God descended upon him, and lo, a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Here there appears on the scene again two Gods—the "Word" and doubtless the God with whom the "Word" had dwelt in the beginning. In other words here was God the Father and God the Son, both present, yet both distinct and separate—two personages—two Gods.⁴

^r Matt. iii: 16, 17.

^s The prophet Joseph, referring to this subject, says: "I wish to declare I have always, and in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods. It has been preached by the elders for fifteen years. I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father,

In the greeting to the seven churches of Asia, which John embodies in his preface to the Apocalypse he says: "Grace be unto you * * * from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness. * * * Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests *unto God and his Father*; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."^t I call special attention to the words written above in *Italics*—"unto God and his Father," which can only mean God and the Father of God, which certainly conveys the idea of a plurality of Gods."

I have not space here to consider such expressions—with which the scriptures abound—as "The Lord God is God of Gods and Lord of Lords;"^v "The Lord, God of Gods, the Lord, God of Gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know if it be in rebellion" etc.^w "O give thanks to the God of Gods * * * O give thanks to the Lord of Lords."^x "And shall speak marvelous things against the God of

and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a spirit; and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods. If this is in accordance with the New Testament, lo, and behold! We have three Gods anyhow, and they are plural; and who can contradict it?" From a Discourse of 16th of June, 1844, *Millennial Star*, Vol. xxiv, p. 108.

^t Rev. i: 1-6.

"Commenting on this text the prophet said: "If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God, the Father of Jesus Christ, had a Father, you may suppose that he had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father? And where was there ever a father without first being a son? Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor? And everything comes in this way. Paul says that that which is earthly is in the likeness of that which is heavenly. Hence, if Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that he had a Father also? I despise the idea of being scared to death at such a doctrine, for the Bible is full of it." Discourse of June 16, 1844, *Millennial Star*, Vol. xxiv, p. 109.

^v Deut. x: 17.

^w Josh. xxii: 22.

^x Psalms cxxxvi: 2, 3.

Gods.”^y “The Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of Lords and king of kings.”^z

Such expressions I know would be worthless as evidence in the matter under discussion if found in the mouths of heathen kings and prophets who are sometimes represented as speaking in the Bible; but the expressions here carefully selected are found on the lips of Moses, of the children of Israel, David, Daniel, and the Apostle John; and coming as they do from recognized and divinely authorized servants of God, they are important as not only upholding but proclaiming the idea of a plurality of Gods.

“I and my Father are one,” said Jesus on one occasion. “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him:”—

Jesus—“Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me?”

The Jews—“For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

Jesus—“Is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods? If he [that is, God who gave the law] called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father believe me not.”^a

Let it be observed that in the above conversation when Jesus was accused of making himself God, he did not deny the charge; but on the contrary, called their attention to the fact that God in the law he had given to Israel had said to some of them—“Ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.” And further, Jesus argued, if those unto whom the word of God came were called Gods in the Jewish

^y Dan. xi: 36.

^z Rev. xvii: 14.

^a John x: 30-37.

law, and the scripture wherein the fact was declared could not be broken, that is, the truth denied or gainsaid—why should the Jews complain when he, too, who had been especially sanctified by God the Father, called himself the Son of God?

On another occasion the following dialogue took place between Jesus and the Pharisees:

Jesus—What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?

Pharisees—“The son of David.”

Jesus—“How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying—The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thy foes thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?”^b

The Pharisees could make him no answer, nor dared they question him further. All that concerns me in the passage is to note that one God is represented as saying to another—“Sit thou upon my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool”—and that clearly proves the existence of more than one God.

No higher authority than this can be cited in support of any theological doctrine. These conversations of Jesus with the Jews so completely prove that Jesus himself taught the existence of a plurality of Divine Intelligences, that there can be no questioning it.

I shall be told, however, that Paul expressly says: “There is none other God but one.” That statement taken alone would seem conclusive; but considered in connection with its context, which explains it, it will be found in harmony with all the passages here produced to prove a plurality of Gods. The single statement quoted above is immediately followed by these words: “For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be

^b Matt. xxii. 41, 45. Also Psalms cx. 1.

Gods many, and Lords many); but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him.”^c

From this it appears that there be many that are called Gods both in heaven and in earth. Had the reference to many Gods and many Lords been confined to these that are called such in the earth, the force of the passage might have been broken somewhat by the probability that reference was made to the false gods of the heathens; but when we are told that “there be that are called Gods whether in heaven or in earth,” by which I understand that there are those that are called Gods both in heaven and in earth, Christians will not claim that the many Gods spoken of as being in heaven are false Gods.^d

But still the apostle teaches that to us there is but one God, the Father; and one Lord, Jesus Christ. So also taught the Prophet Joseph.^e He taught that there was but one Godhead to whom it was proper for us to pay divine honors in worship—God, the Father; Jesus Christ, the Son, and of whom the Holy Ghost is the witness. And these three, in the teachings of the great modern prophet, as in the teachings of the Jewish scriptures, constitute one Godhead, or Grand Presidency to whom alone man owes allegiance to be expressed in divine worship. But this does not strike out of

^c I Cor. viii: 4, 6.

^d Ibid.

^e On the passage under consideration the prophet remarked: “Paul says there are Gods many and Lords many—I want to set it forth in a plain and simple manner—but to us there is but one God—that is, pertaining to us; and he is in and through all. But if Joseph Smith says there are Gods many and Lords many, they cry, Away with him! Crucify him! Crucify him!” * * * Paul, if Joseph Smith is a blasphemer, you are. I say there are Gods many, and Lords many, but to us only one; and we are to be subject to that one.”—Millennial Star, Vol. xxiv, p. 108.

existence the many other Gods and Lords that live and have dominion in other universes and worlds, any more than it strikes out of existence other kings and emperors of this world, when we say that to the British subject there is but one sovereign to whom he owes allegiance.

This doctrine of the existence of a plurality of divine Intelligences in the world has further support by a very eminent professor—no less a personage than Prof. James, late of Harvard university. Within the year, his lectures before Oxford university, England, have been published, and this work bears the title “A Pluralistic Universe.” The outcome of Prof. James’ learned discussion of all the questions involved in this subject is to the effect that instead of the universe being, as he satirically speaks of it, when referring to the monistic view of it—“a solid block,” it is a pluralistic universe. One of his passages runs as follows:

“I propose before you that we should discuss the question of God, without entangling ourselves in advance in the monistic assumption. Is it probable that there is a superhuman consciousness at all, in the first place? When that is settled, the further question whether its form be monistic or pluralistic is in order.”

This question as to there being a “superhuman consciousness” the professor decides in the affirmative as at least probable; and then he announces that the only way to escape from the inconsistencies of other theories “is to be frankly pluralistic and assume that the superhuman consciousness, however vast it may be, has itself an eternal envelopment and, consequently, is finite.”

“The line of least resistance,” he adds, “then, as it seems to me, both in theology and philosophy, is to accept, along with the superhuman consciousness, the notion that it is not

all-embracing, the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that he is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once. These, I need hardly tell you, are the terms in which common men have usually carried on their active commerce with God; and the monistic perfections that make the notion of him so paradoxical practically and morally are the colder addition of remote professorial minds operating *in distans* upon conceptional substitutes for him alone." (page 312.) Professor James also explains that present day Monism carefully repudiates complicity with Spinozistic Monism, "In that, it explains, the many get dissolved in the one and lost, whereas in the improved idealistic form they get preserved in all their manyness as the one's eternal object. The absolute itself is thus represented by absolutists as having a pluralistic object. But if even the absolute has to have a pluralistic vision, why should we ourselves hesitate to be pluralists on our own sole account? Why should we envelop our many with the 'one' that brings so much poison in its train?" (page 311.)

Addressing himself directly to Oxford men on the movement of late towards pluralistic conceptions of the universe, Professor James says: "If Oxford men could be ignorant of anything, it might almost seem that they had remained ignorant of the great empirical movement towards a pluralistic panpsychic view of the universe, into which our own generation has been drawn, and which threatens to short-circuit their methods entirely and become their religious rival unless they are willing to make themselves its allies," (page 313.)

The professor also insists that by taking the system of the world pluralistically we banish what he calls our "foreignness"—by which I understand him to mean our apartness—from the world (i. e., universe.) "We are indeed

internal parts of God and not external creations, on any possible reading of the panpsychic system. Yet because God is not the absolute, but is himself a part when the system is conceived pluralistically, his functions can be taken as not wholly dissimilar to those of the other smaller parts,—as similar to our functions consequently.

“Having an environment, being in time, and working out a history just like ourselves, he escapes from the foreignness from all that is human, of the static timeless perfect absolute. * * *

“No matter what the content of the universe may be, if you only allow that it is many everywhere and always, that nothing real escapes from having an environment; so far from defeating its rationality, as the absolutists so unanimously pretend, you leave it in possession of the maximum amount of rationality practically attainable by our minds. Your relations with it, intellectual, emotional, and active, remain fluent and congruous with your own nature’s chief demands.” (pages 318-9.)

We have not space of course to enter into all the explanations and arguments that Professor James enters upon in treating this subject, but the purpose of the whole work is to establish the idea that the unity one discovers in the laws and forces of the universe, grows out of a “free harmony of individual entities,” that the “absolute reality” is a system of self-acting beings, forming a unity; and hence, he judges the world to be, “a pluralistic universe.” With this view Professor Howison, of the University of California agrees, if I understand him aright, in his contribution to a volume on the “Conception of God” (pp. 81-128). And so this doctrine of a plurality of divine Intelligences existing in the universe, as taught by Joseph Smith, is receiving confirmation by the philosophizing of some of the foremost learned men of our age and country, and, for that matter, of the world.

If the phrase "Grand Presidency" be substituted for Godhead; and "President" for God, we shall have a nomenclature that will better convey correct ideas to the mind respecting the Gods than that now in common use. How, then, would the teaching of the Prophet Joseph respecting the Gods rise to meet the conceptions of the extent and grandeur of the universe, both as now known to our scientists and as revealed through the prophet himself! An infinitude of worlds and world-systems rising one above the other in ever-increasing splendor in limitless space and eternal duration, would have, as a concomitant, an endless line of exalted divine intelligences—exalted men—to preside over and within them as Priests, Kings, Patriarchs, Angels—Arch-Angels—Gods! Nor is there confusion, disorder, or strife in their vast dominions; for they all govern upon the same righteous principle that characterizes the government of God the Father. The Gods have attained unto the excellence that Jesus prayed for in behalf of his apostles and those who might believe on their word, when he said: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one as we are.* * * * * Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; * * * and the glory which thou givest me, I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one."^e

If that prayer does not contemplate the apostles and those who believe on their words becoming like God the Father and Jesus Christ; sharing their glory and their power; becoming one with them as they are now one with each other, hence becoming as they are—Gods!—then the lan-

^e St. John xvii.

guage is without meaning, and is hollow mockery, the meaningless verbiage of one who knew not what he was saying. But Jesus knew for what he was praying; and he knew that he was not asking in behalf of his apostles and those who would believe on their words the unattainable. He was but asking for them that glory and excellence and exaltation to which many had already attained in other worlds.

I say the Gods had attained unto that excellence of oneness that Jesus prayed his disciples might possess, and since the Gods have attained unto it, and all govern their worlds and world-systems by the same spirit and upon the same principles, there is a unity in their government that makes it one even as they are one. Let worlds and systems of worlds, galaxies of systems and universes extend as they may throughout limitless space, Joseph Smith has revealed the existence of a government which while characterized by unity is still co-extensive with them. Let duration, as to the past, be without beginning—yet Joseph Smith has revealed the great truth that in the beginningless duration there has existed always an endless succession of exalted Intelligences, called Gods. Let duration, as to the future be without end,—let the end of time be as remote as the beginning of time, which it is, for neither exists—yet Joseph Smith has revealed the great truth that in that endless future new worlds, systems of worlds and universes will be created from the exhaustless store of eternal matter, and made the habitation of the ever increasing posterity of the Gods. Let no one fear—there is room for all this multiplying and increasing in limitless space. Let no one fear—there is material for all these worlds and world-systems in the exhaustless store of eternal matter distributed throughout limitless space. Let no one fear—there is time enough in endless duration to accomplish all that God has decreed through his prophet pertaining to the perfecting and exalting of our race.

Nor will this exaltation of man detract from the majesty and exaltation of Divine Intelligences. Joseph Smith's doctrine does not degrade Deity, it merely points out the future exaltation of man. The glory of God does not consist in his being alone in his greatness, but in sharing that greatness and his intelligence and glory with others. It is a case where the more is given the richer he becomes who gives, because he is constantly widening the circle of his own power and dominion. As the glory of earthly parents is increased by having beautiful, intelligent children, capable of attaining to the same intelligence, development and standing as the parents, so the glory of the heavenly parent—God—is added unto by having sons who shall attain unto the same honor and exaltation as himself, and who shall be worthy of sharing his power and glory and everlasting dominion.

What glory is here! What honor! What exaltation! What thrones, principalities, kingdoms, dominions, powers! What incentive to right living! What encouragement to struggle against weaknesses and make war for righteousness against the flesh, the world and the devil! Well may the apostle say—when speaking of this doctrine—“*And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure.*”^f

This is the doctrine of the great modern prophet Joseph Smith—the testimony of this New Witness for God. And in the sublimity of the doctrine; in the grandeur of it;

^f “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the Sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.” First Epistle of John iii: 1-4.

in the noble aspirations a contemplation of it inspires in the soul of man, may be seen the evidence of divine inspiration in him who re-announced it to the world.