THE THEOLOGY OF THOMAS DICK
AND ITS POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP
TO THAT OF JOSEPH SMITH

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INTRODUCTION

The theology taught by the Prophet Joseph was progressively developed, i.e., it evolved throughout Joseph's life. At no one period in his life could it be said that he had received and taught the entire scope of the Gospel. Indeed, that theology continued to develop following the martyrdom of the Prophet. Towards the end of his life the development of his theology moved more rapidly. He became most explicit about certain doctrines which were only hinted at earlier in his life. In a footnote appended to the sermon by the Prophet known as the "King Follett Discourse," Elder B. H. Roberts wrote: "The Prophet lived his life in crescendo. From small beginnings, it rose in breadth and power as he neared its close. As a teacher he reached the climax of his career in this discourse." ¹ Thus it was with his theology: 'here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept.'

Beginning with a simple, yet majestic vision of God in 1820, the Prophet could, by 1844 discuss in depth the origin of that exalted Being, and man's potential for becoming like Him. During those intervening years Joseph also touched upon many other doctrines. Late in his life he implied that not all of that doctrine was the necessary result of revelation. It could come from any source, as long as it was the truth.²

¹Quoted in Joseph Fielding Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1964), 356.
²See ibid., 313.
were to emphasize and re-emphasize that fact. This is as it should be: if there is a God, from whom all truth is revealed to man, then it matters not what the earthly carrier of that truth may be—ultimately its revelation to man comes from God.

The above statements are a summary of the general stand of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That the critics of that Church should disagree is most natural. Rather than agreeing with the Church that all Mormon doctrine is God-given, regardless of its proximate source, the critics indicate that the source is merely man's mind, without any reference to God's relationship to the doctrine. A case in point is the Book of Mormon. Since its publication (indeed, even prior to that time), its critics have sought to determine the sources for its ideas. Mrs. Fawn M. Brodie even goes so far as to state that "painstaking research can uncover the sources of all its ideas." Nowhere does she cite Deity or the ancient near east as the source for those ideas. Another work produced by the Prophet Joseph Smith which has been attacked almost since its publication is the Book of Abraham. While Mrs. Brodie does not make the same statement regarding it as she did about the Book of Mormon, it is evident that her attitude is the same. In her book she devotes several pages to what she feels to be the sources for the Book of Abraham theology, as well as some of the later theology taught by Joseph Smith. Mrs. Brodie states that there were two sources for most of the doctrine contained in the Book of Abraham. Those sources were his recent (1835) study of Hebrew, and the writings of a Scottish


4 Ibid., 171-2. Her entire statement relevant to this thesis will be found in Appendix I, herein.
theologian named Thomas Dick. From his Hebrew he was supposed to have learned that the term 'Elohim' was a plural form for 'God,' meaning 'many Gods.' Not all would agree with this hypothesis, however. In a recent article Professor Louis Zucker of the University of Utah has stated why he believes that Joseph Smith could not have reached the conclusion of a plurality of Gods from his Hebrew classes conducted by Professor Seixas. Seixas, according to Zucker, did not believe such a doctrine himself, and would not, therefore, have taught it to Joseph Smith.5

Mrs. Brodie attributes several other doctrines to the "fact" that the Prophet had "recently been reading" the works of the above mentioned Thomas Dick. It is with this man's theology and Mrs. Brodie's assertions regarding its relationship to that of Joseph Smith that this thesis will concern itself.

Statement of the Problem

Mrs. Fawn Brodie asserts that Joseph Smith had "recently been reading" the works of a Scottish scientist-theologian by the name of Thomas Dick. She bases that assertion upon the erroneous belief that "Sidney Rigdon quoted openly from Dick" in an article he wrote for the Messenger and Advocate, an early L.D.S. Church publication.6 She apparently assumes that if Rigdon knew Dick's writings, Joseph must also have been familiar with them. A number of preliminary points need to be made here. The page references to Rigdon's article are incorrect, as


6Brodie, 171.
given by Mrs. Brodie. Furthermore, Rigdon's article is completed before 
the passage from Dick is quoted. The remark inserted between Rigdon's 
name at the end of his article and the quotation from Dick clearly 
indicates that it was the editor of the Messenger and Advocate, Oliver 
Cowdery, who was inserting the quotation, and not Sidney Rigdon. This 
does not alter the proximity of the book to the person of Joseph Smith, 
but it may, perhaps, indicate something regarding Mrs. Brodie's research. 
It is of further interest that Mrs. Brodie knows only this one reference 
to Dick. Several months later Oliver's brother Warren, then the editor 
of the Church periodical, quoted from a second book by Thomas Dick. Due 
to the importance she places on the one book as a source, it is certain 
that Mrs. Brodie did not know of the second. If she had she would 
undoubtedly have referred to it as well. She assumes that the similarity 
existing between some of Dick's writings and those in the Book of Abraham 
demonstrate that "Joseph Smith's later teachings came directly from 
Dick." 7 In commenting upon this, Hugh Nibley states that Joseph Smith 
could not very well have got his earlier teachings from Dick, 
though his later teachings are simply a continuation of them. 
Yet as soon as a work appears that resembles what he is doing, 
Brodie immediately pounces upon it as the prophet's only source. 
If she would show how the doctrine of progress was stolen from 
Dick, the lady should not have been at such pains to show that 
progressivism had been a basic part of its background from the 
first. 8

What Professor Nibley relates is essentially correct: many of the 
Prophet's later teachings are found in an embryonic state in his 
earlier writings. The problem, however, is that Dick's works, here under 
discussion, were available in the United States at least as early as

7Ibid., 172.

8Hugh Nibley, No Ma'am, That's Not History (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946), 18.
1829, having been published in Massachusetts in that year, as well as the following year. In essence Brodie makes the following claims as to the reliance of "Joseph's metaphysical system" on that of Dick:

1) "Joseph Smith had recently been reading Thomas Dick's Philosophy of a Future State."
2) "Dick's whole work made a lasting impression on Joseph."
3) "Dick's elucidation of the thesis that matter is eternal and indestructible Joseph found convincing."
4) The concept that the earth was "organized out of already existing matter rather than created out of nothing" came from Dick.
5) The concept of a grand center of the universe, and a throne of God (i.e., Kolob), came from Dick. (The term "Kolob" did not come from Dick, just the concept.)
6) The concept that man's immortal soul will progress eternally towards a state of perfection came from Dick.
7) The Book of Abraham was the "germ of Joseph's metaphysical system," the ideas of which came from Dick.
8) Brodie asks the reader to "compare the Book of Abraham with Dick: Philosophy of a Future State."  

The purpose of this thesis will be (1) to determine the nature of Dick's entire theology, gained from all his books; (2) to compare the writings of Joseph Smith with those of Thomas Dick, to determine the points at which Dick's writings could have played an influential part in the formulation of Smith's theology; (3) to determine the validity of Brodie's assertions.  

In order to determine the degree of influence these writings of Dick could have had on Joseph Smith, the following approaches will be utilized:

(1) It will be necessary to discuss all of Dick's philosophy, and not just a few isolated statements which Brodie quotes out of context. When these statements are left in the context of Dick's entire philosophy they present a considerably different meaning from that given to them by Brodie. Whether this was a conscious and purposeful procedure

9Brodie, 171-172, all of which is quoted in Appendix I, herein.
on Brodie's part will not be the concern of this thesis. It will be with the validity of her conclusions, not her means of arriving at them, which will be discussed; i.e., whether Joseph Smith was, or could have been, influenced by the writings of Thomas Dick.

(2) As Dick's theology is discussed, the differences or similarities to that of Joseph Smith will be pointed out. When the similarities bear upon those assertions made by Brodie, fuller investigations will be made to determine if there has indeed been an evident reliance on Dick, or whether those ideas could have been gained from a source other than Thomas Dick.

(3) The conclusions reached will deal with the validity of Brodie's assertions; i.e., that Joseph Smith read Thomas Dick's books, and was influenced by his ideas; and that the Book of Abraham was the earliest attempt at a metaphysical system by the Prophet.

Related Literature

While there has been a considerable amount of material published dealing with the Book of Abraham, only one writer, other than Brodie, has made any reference to Dick. That writer was Hugh Nibley in his response to Brodie's work. From what Nibley says it is apparent that he has not read Dick, nor did he apparently check Brodie's sources in the *Messenger and Advocate*, for he perpetuates the mistake made by Brodie, by attributing the quotation from Dick to Sidney Rigdon.\(^{10}\) The majority of the remaining books have dealt with doctrinal themes, commentaries, archaeological evidences, Egyptian evidences, or studies on changes in the text of the work, or the historical chronology of the book. These will not have any bearing on the present work.

\(^{10}\)Nibley, 16.
Source of Data

Although Thomas Dick wrote several articles other than his major works (in ten volumes), only these major works will be cited. They were written during his 'literary' period, and contain the essentials of his theology. Of main importance for this paper will be the second and third books he published: *The Philosophy of Religion* (1826), and *Philosophy of a Future State* (1828). These two books were each published at least twice in the United States, before they appeared in the *Messenger and Advocate*, in 1829 and again in 1830. They were each quoted in the *Messenger and Advocate* by its editors, Oliver and Warren Cowdery, in 1836 and 1837.\(^{11}\) It is from one of these quotations that Brodie sees evidence that Joseph Smith had read one of Dick's books. In the course of the present study it has been determined that several of Thomas Dick's books were reviewed in English and American periodicals in the period from 1830 to 1860. These are valuable documents regarding the reception given Dick by the public, and the respect given his works. These will be referred to in their proper places, as necessary.

Indications of Joseph Smith's theology will be cited from the *Doctrine and Covenants*, *Book of Mormon*, and *Pearl of Great Price*. It is not to be understood by this assertion that he was the sole author of any of these works, but rather that they are representative of part of his religious contribution. Early periodicals published by The Church will also be cited when appropriate, in order to clarify the concepts held by the early Church.

\(^{11}\) *Messenger and Advocate*, Volume III (December, 1836), 423-425; Volume III (February, 1837), 461-463; Volume III (March, 1837), 468-469.
THOMAS DICK:
AN INTRODUCTION

Before dealing with some of the specifics of Thomas Dick's theology, it would be appropriate to give a brief introduction to the life and general philosophy of Dick. This will introduce the reader to the man behind the theology, and serve as background to his beliefs. Through an understanding of Dick's early life, and the beliefs of his parents, an idea may be gained about his own feelings regarding life, and the beliefs of his parents, an idea may be gained about his own feelings regarding life, and more particularly, regarding his feelings on the position of religion in life.

Dick's people were Scottish, who had been strongly Calvinistic since the days of John Knox. During the early eighteenth century rationalism had lessened the strictness of the religion, and weakened the emphasis on free grace. In several congregations the more devout members became concerned about this dampening of their religious faith. Accordingly, these folk set up Praying Societies, which were groups meeting together outside the main church body for discussion and mutual edification. Eventually, they were forbidden to meet. Rather than return to the main flock they seceded in 1734, and formed the Secession Church. Their religion has been described as a "soul-warming and sin-denouncing gospel," where an "exact morality" was required. Consequently, "most

forms of pleasure were denounced as sinful, with a greater emphasis on free grace than on law.\textsuperscript{2} The faction grew rapidly, with congregations founded early in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle, and Dundee (where Dick was later born). Most of the membership of this new faction came from the 'Praying Societies' which had been formed in many congregations. Although the majority were poor, or middle class people, with little political activity, they were nevertheless a "fairly prosperous folk."\textsuperscript{3}

The Secession Church divided in 1752, but was reunited again in 1847, forming the United Presbyterian Church.\textsuperscript{4} This will explain why, in some biographies, Thomas Dick is stated as having been a member of the United Presbyterian Church, while in others he is said to have been a member of the Secessionist Church.\textsuperscript{5} It is into this religious atmosphere then, that Thomas Dick was born, on November 24, 1774.\textsuperscript{6}

His Life

Mungo Dick, his father, was a small linen manufacturer and intended that Thomas follow in his footsteps. Thomas was a highly intelligent youth, however, and his interests were soon directed elsewhere. His biographer writes that he was able to read the New Testament before he


\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 298.

\textsuperscript{4}Brown, 321.

\textsuperscript{5}Compare, for instance, the articles on Thomas Dick appearing in the 1878 and 1911 editions of the \textit{Encyclopedia Britannica}.

\textsuperscript{6}Unless otherwise noted, the material dealing with the life of Thomas Dick is from Robert Chambers, \textit{Eminent Scotsmen} (London: Thomson's Edition, 1868-1870), \textit{445-446}. All articles in later encyclopedias are based mainly upon this article.
went to school (having been taught his letters by his mother). Based on evidence found in his later writings this book greatly influenced him, as he quotes from it often, and speaks of Christ and early Christianity in the highest of terms. The wonders of the natural world caught his interest at an early age, also. In his later life he reminisced:

I recollect, when a boy of about seven or eight years of age, frequently musing on such subjects as those to which we have now alluded [regarding the sun, moon, stars, etc.]. I sometimes looked out from a window, in the daytime, with fixed attention, on a pure azure sky, and sometimes stretched myself on my back on a meadow, or in a garden, and looked up to the zenith to contemplate the blue ethereal. On such occasions a variety of strange ideas sometimes passed through my mind. I wondered how far the blue vault of heaven might extend; whether it was a solid transparent arch, or empty space; what would be seen could I transport myself to the highest point I perceived; and what display the Almighty made of himself in those regions so far removed from mortal view. I asked myself whether the heavens might be bounded on all sides by a solid wall; how far this wall might extend in thickness; or whether there was nothing but empty space, suppose we could fly forever in any direction. I then entered into a train of inquiries as to what would have been the consequences had neither heaven nor earth been made, and had God alone existed in the boundless void. Why was the world created? What necessity was there why God himself should exist? And why was not all one vast blank, devoid of matter and intelligence? My thoughts ran into wild confusion; they were overwhelming, and they became even oppressive and painful, so as to induce me to put a check to them, and to hasten to my playful associates and amusements.7

Dick penned these lines 45 years after the occurrence of the events described. It is therefore possible that his mental state at the later age influenced the nature of the questions he remembered asking himself when he was younger. At any rate he apparently showed a very early interest in the world about him and wondered at its glories.

7Thomas Dick, Celestial Scenery; or, the wonders of the planetary system displayed; illustrating the perfections of Deity and a plurality of worlds (Philadelphia: E.C. and J. Biddle, 1859), 17-18. First published in 1837 in Scotland. Hereafter cited as Celestial Scenery.
The year after the above thoughts entered his head, his ninth, was a decisive year for the young boy. His biographer writes that it was in that year that he observed the "appearance of a remarkable meteor" which caused him to be overcome with awe. Knowledge of that meteor comes chiefly from Dick's biographers. However, in his last work Dick referred to a fire-ball which passed over England and several adjacent countries on August 18, 1783 (when he was nine years old). Dick wrote that when this fire-ball, or meteor, passed over "certain parts of England a loud report was heard and a hissing noise." While this may not be the one responsible for his later interest, it certainly describes an event that could have startled a nine year old. At any rate, from that moment he determined to study astronomy, and henceforth read all he could on the subject. An industrious youth, he saved his pocket money in order to purchase some eye-glass lenses from neighbors, with which he fashioned for himself a small telescope with a machine he himself had built. When his parents became more familiar with the reasonableness of his interest and his desires to pursue further his studies in that field, they permitted him to determine his own future. This permission granted by his parents was also due to two illnesses Thomas had between his thirteenth and sixteenth years. During these years he was stricken with a severe attack of smallpox, which was soon followed by a case of the measles. These left him too weak to work at his father's loom. These several events, then, were responsible for the direction life was to take for Thomas Dick.

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With the new freedom to determine his own future, Dick spent the four year period from 1790 to 1794 acting as an assistant at a school in Dundee, while preparing himself for the University of Edinburgh. Following his admittance to the University, he supported himself by private teaching while pursuing the study of philosophy and theology. Following the completion of his education, in 1801, he became licensed to preach in the Secession Church. During the next 16 or 17 years Dick was associated with the Secession Church, first as a probationer, then for ten years as a teacher in their school at Methven. It was during his ten year sojourn at Methven (1807-1817) that his literary career began. He was very interested in children, and the importance of educating them. Consequently, in 1809 he prepared a work for the instruction of young people. It was never published however. Also during this period he published several articles dealing with "literary and Philosophical Societies, adapted to the middling and lower ranks of the community."10

Dick's activities as an astronomer were just beginning to expand during this period. He apparently spent much free time observing the heavens through his telescopes. His first articles dealing with "the results of several hundreds of observations" on the stars were published in 1813-1814.11 Most of this early work dealt with observations done on the planet Venus.

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9 For a description of this intended work, see Thomas Dick, Mental Illumination (Philadelphia: E.C. and J. Biddle, 1859), 143-146. First published in 1835 in Scotland.

10 See ibid., 367-368, footnote.

The next ten year period (1817-1827) saw Dick achieve status as a professional writer. Although he had published several articles while at Methven, the ten years he spent at the public school at Perth saw his first books published. Chambers, in the earliest known biography on Dick, indicates that the first book, entitled *The Christian Philosopher*, was first published in 1827.\(^\text{12}\) This, however, is incorrect. The *Edinburgh Review*, under date of October 1823, indicates that the above mentioned book had already been published by that date.\(^\text{13}\) The success of this book, which went through at least eight editions by 1842, and several after that date,\(^\text{14}\) allowed Dick to retire from teaching and build for himself a house. This house, on a prominent point overlooking the Tay (an important water inlet near Dundee, Scotland), Dick outfitted with an observatory and a library for his books.\(^\text{15}\) This house was built in 1827, and remained his home until his death on July 29, 1857, at the age of 82.

*The Christian Philosopher* was not Dick's only literary activity during his period at Perth. He also published *Philosophy of Religion* in

\(^{12}\)Chambers, 446.

\(^{13}\) *Edinburgh Review*, XXXIX (October 1823), 277. Cf. XXXIX (January 1824, 516; XLII (August 1825) for further references.

\(^{14}\) At least five later editions are known to have been printed.

\(^{15}\) "The plot of ground on which this edifice was erected was so barren that nothing would grow on it, until he had laid eight thousand wheelbarrow loads of fresh soil upon it—and as for the house, it had a room at the top of it with openings to the four cardinal points, and fitted up as an observatory, in which were placed his books and philosophical instruments." Chambers, 446. Cf. Thomas Dick, *The Practical Astronomer* (Philadelphia: E.C. and J. Biddle, 1859), 358-359, and picture preceding title page. First published in 1842.
1826. The year after his retirement, 1828, he published *The Philosophy of a Future State*. As with the other two volumes mentioned, this latter went through several editions. He also continued to publish articles on astronomy, as well as on the education of the young.

During the quarter century which passed following the publication of his first two books, Dick published eight or nine others (for a total of eleven books, in ten volumes.) Several of these were to pass through a great many editions, the entire group being also published a number of times. His other literary activities continued during these years. In 1835-1836 he was also the editor of the first three volumes of the *Educational Magazine and Journal of Christian Philanthropy*, published in London.16 Despite the many editions of his published works, he was to die a pauper. Although he lived frugally, on account of bad contracts with his publishers, he received little remuneration from the sale of his books, at least in the later editions. What sort of bargain was made is not possible to ascertain from present information. That his books sold well, especially in the United States, would seem to be indicated, however by the following statement:

Perhaps no foreign writer has been more generally read, on this side the Atlantic, for the last twenty years, than Dr. Thomas Dick...[His books] have had an extensive and constant sale... It may well be questioned whether any modern writer in the language, on the other side the water, has circulated in this country so large a number of volumes.17

It should be mentioned that these words are part of an introduction to a letter by Dick praising a book which was being advertised. Consequently

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17*Quarterly Review*, IV (1850). Page 5 of a special insert between pages 480 and 481.
it may be possible to consider the praise as mere words, attempting to sell the product Dick praises. That his works were popular, however, and well received, cannot be denied, if the following are any evidence of his popularity:

The several contributions of Dr. Dick to the department of sacred literature, have successively won the favor of wise and good men in both hemispheres.  

Few authors in so important an aim [the enlistment of science and philosophy in the service of religion] have succeeded so well or acquired such popularity... His publications, which went through several editions, were extensively read and highly valued both in Britain and America.

These, together with the earlier statement, indicate that Dick's works were greatly read, at least in the United States. The response to his writings in England and Scotland seems to have been somewhat more critical. One reviewer referred to one of his works as an "aspiring abortion." The work was too broad to cover the material sufficiently, and therefore, in the opinion of that reviewer, was a failure. It might also be significant that the Edinburgh Review made no comments regarding the popularity of his works, other than to mention their publication. In what appears to be the earliest review of The Christian Philosopher (in 1825) the reviewer is very critical of several aspects of Dick's book, including the too frequent reference to his own already published articles. These might be indicative of a lesser reception in Great Britain than in America, as Chambers indicated.

18 Quarterly Review I (January, 1847), 158.  
19 Chambers, 446.  
22 "His popularity as a writer was greater [in the United States] than even at home [in Scotland]." Chambers, 446.
The greatest evidence of his reception, however, is the reports regarding his reputation as a writer. As early as 1836 he had "earned a high reputation for ability as a writer." An 1845 reviewer of Dick's collected works (eight books at that time) refers to them as "incomparable works," containing a "repository of varied knowledge, sound views, and evangelical truths." A later reviewer refers to Dick as a "well known author... who has earned enduring fame by his efforts in the department of sanctified literature." Several reviewers indicate that the works of Thomas Dick would make an "admirable addition to the library of the Christian family," as well as "to Sabbath schools." It is perhaps significant that among the 95 volumes contained in the "Harper's School District Library" were at least three works by Thomas Dick. A fourth work by Dick is contained in the "Sunday-School List" developed by another publishing company. Dick's popularity as a writer was not limited to his religious works. In 1845 he wrote an introduction to an astronomical book entitled, The Geography of the Heavens, by Elijah H. Burritt. In referring to this introduction, the publishers wrote the following:

In presenting a new edition of this work to the public, it is proper to point out several very important improvements which have been made. Dr. Dick of Scotland, so well known both in

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23The Christian Review, I (1836), 317. 24Ibid., X (1845), 634.
26Christian Review, X (1845), 634.
29Methodist Quarterly Review, XXXI (1849), 158.
Europe and in this country, as the author of the Christian Philoso-
pher, and other scientific and popular works, has prepared
expressly for the work, an Introduction on the Advantages of the
Study of Astronomy. So far as authority and name can go to give
currency to the work, and to establish the confidence of teachers
in it as a proper textbook, this simple fact, the publisher
flatters himself, furnishes every testimonial which can be
desired.30

The work goes on to quote several times from Dick's Christian Philosopher
and in one place refers to "the eminent astronomer, Thomas Dick."31

It must be admitted in view of the many editions, as well as the generally
favorable reviews, that Dick's writings were well received in the United
States, and to a lesser degree, in Great Britain.

Thomas Dick was apparently a congenial person, and a gentleman, as
well as a scholar. He appears gracious when referring to those he knew
personally. He also appears to have been friendly to, and well liked
by, his neighbors. An indication of his popularity with his neighbors
may be gained from their reaction to his poverty. Just when he began to
approach this state is uncertain. However, in 1836 he must still have
had a goodly sum of money, as he wrote in the preface to a book published
in that year that "should any pecuniary emolument be derived from the
sale of this volume, the greater portion of it will be devoted to the
purpose of social and religious improvement" of mankind.32 A pauper
certainly would not have made a statement such as that. By 1845,
however, he had reached the point where he needed financial help.
Accordingly, "an attempt was made by some of the most influential in

30 "Publishers Notice," in Elijah H. Burritt, The Geography of the
Heavens (New York: Huntington and Savage, 1845), preceding Preface.
31 Ibid., 191. Cf. 159, 180, 240.
32 Thomas Dick, Covetousness (Philadelphia: E.C. and J. Biddle,
1859), iv, preface. First published in 1836.
Dundee and its neighbourhood, to obtain for him a pension from government."
This was in 1845. Although the attempt failed, the friends made another
in 1847, which was more successful. The small amount given by the
government was augmented by people in the area following an appeal through
the local press. This pension, both from the government and his friends,
was continued until his death, some ten years later.\textsuperscript{33} This is surely
an indication of the high esteem in which they regarded him, both as a
scholar and as a gentleman. A further indication of the high esteem in
which he was held is the fact that "early in his literary career" an
honorary LL.D., was conferred upon him by Union College in New York.\textsuperscript{34}
Four years before his death he was admitted to membership in the Royal
Astronomical Society. Despite this honor it is sad to note that when
Dick died, the Society's publication knew nothing about him, and what
they did print was mostly in error.\textsuperscript{35}

His Theology

Although Thomas Dick was reared in a strict Scottish Secessionist
home, it appears that he left that body in his later life, at least in
regards to active work in it. One source indicates that this severance
took place in 1805, but this could not be the case, as he taught from

\textsuperscript{33}Chambers, 446. \textsuperscript{34}Stephen and Lee (eds.), 923.

\textsuperscript{35}Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, XVIII (1858), 98. "Dr. Dick was born in 1772, and died at the age of eighty-three.
The Royal Astronomical Council have not been able to procure any
details of his life. He published various works on general science and
natural theology, of which 'Celestial Scenery,' and 'The Christian
Philosopher,' are well known. He was originally intended for a minister
of the Scotch Secession Church, but it does not appear that he actually
entered the ministry. In his latter years he had a pension from the
Queen." The italics indicate the errors in this announcement.
1807-1817 in the Secession school at Methven. From the evidence it would appear that the beginnings of this severance took place between 1815 and 1825. In 1817 he left the Secession school in favor of a public school. This move could have been for economic reasons, of course. However, in his second book, *The Philosophy of Religion*, published in 1826, Dick indicated that he had formed his own opinions on the leading subjects with which Christianity is concerned. He further "assumes the unalienable right of thinking for himself." He also wrote that the study of the "voluminous systems of Ethical science" or the "laboured disquisitions on the principles of Morals" serve only to "perplex the mind." He also taught that the "discussion of metaphysical questions in theology... are 'unprofitable and vain.'" A further indication of his break with the faith of his fathers may be found in two books he published in 1833 and 1835. In these two books, *The Diffusion of Knowledge*, and *Mental Illumination*, Dick indicated his displeasure at the dissension that had almost destroyed the Christian Church. The rise of sectarianism had caused much animosity within the Church which had acted as a retarding force upon its growth. In order for the Church to present a united front it will be necessary, Dick wrote, for the several sects (Dick mentioned Catholics and Anglicans, as well as Baptists and Independents) to give up all beliefs not found in the Bible. Seemingly these sectarians would include his own Secessionist Church.

36 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, VII (1878 edition). In the 1911 edition all reference to this severance is left out.


Dick's displeasure with the Christian Church is apparent in his writings as early as 1826, in his *The Philosophy of Religion*. There he wrote that Christianity had failed to produce the proper affects in its adherents. The reason for this was that "its native purity began to be tainted... The true glory of Christianity was sadly tarnished and obscured, and its heavenly spirit almost extinguished" in the period following the Apostles.\(^4\) It would appear from his attitude, as well as his constant use of science, that Dick was a free-thinker, and not tied down to any one body of beliefs. This will become more apparent as his philosophy is developed throughout this thesis. Although he gave up the clerical and teaching professions he did not give up occasional preaching. In a later edition of the *Christian Philosopher* he commented on a lecture "lately published, entitled, 'Discoveries of Modern Geology not inconsistent with Revelation'—being the 6th of a series of lectures to young men, delivered in Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, in March, 1842."\(^1\)

Thomas Dick might accurately be referred to as a nineteenth century ecumenist. As just mentioned he believed the divisions within the ranks of Christendom had prevented it from doing the work it was sent to do. Dick was a Bible literalist, who accepted the "SACRED RECORDS, just as they stand;—without any regard to the theories of philosophers, the opinions of commentators, or the systems of theologians."\(^2\) Based as it is upon these "sacred oracles," Christianity is declared to be a

\(^4\)Ibid. 404ff.


"revelation from God to man."\(^{43}\) In its formative years Christianity was a blessing to mankind. Following those early years the religion of Christ became encumbered with "human folly which was incorporated with its institutions."\(^{44}\) With the introduction of these "human systems of Divinity" dissension arose within the ranks of the Christian body.\(^{45}\) This dissension led to theological disputes about subjects which Dick felt to be of inferior moment. Had the professors of Christianity paid more attention to the original record (i.e., the Bible) they would have placed more emphasis upon the "practical requisitions" of the Christian faith, rather than on their theories.\(^{46}\) In other words, the failure of Christianity had brought about, or rather, permitted to continue, the moral degradation of the human race. For the purpose of Christianity was to "raise the human race from that degradation into which they have been so long immersed, and to promote the renovation of the moral world."\(^{47}\) There are two ways of bringing about the "moral renovation of mankind," the two being related to each other. The first way is a reunion of all Christian parties prior to spreading that religion to other nations; the second being the education of the human race, or "mental illumination" by means of the "diffusion of knowledge."

One of the leading precepts of Christianity, wrote Dick, was its emphasis on love—of man for God and of man for man. Christianity's departure from its original source had caused departure from this principle of love. With this apostasy came "contentions about matters of 'doubtful disputation' which have occupied the room of fervent piety

\(^{43}\) Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 225.  \(^{44}\) Ibid., 248.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 291. Cf. Dick, Mental Illumination, 290.

\(^{46}\) Dick, Mental Illumination, 11. \(^{47}\) Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 224.
and practical godliness." These arguments often involved themselves about such questions as the mode of baptism, the manner of conducting Sabbath schools, or the place of human reason in the lives of religious people. For Thomas Dick these arguments were of worthless value. The educated man "can never believe that God should attach so great a degree of importance to such questions, that either the one party or the other should be considered as exclusive supporters of divine truth, while they infringe the law of Christian love, and forbear 'to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.'" By dividing itself on such relatively unimportant questions Christianity had lost all right to distinction among the world's religions. Dick continued:

While we ought to recognize and appreciate every portion of divine truth, insofar as we perceive its evidence,—it is nevertheless the dictate of an enlightened understanding, that those truths which are of the first importance demand our first and chief attention. Every controversy agitated among Christians on subjects of inferior importance, has a direct tendency to withdraw the attention from the great objects which distinguish the revelations of the Bible and there cannot be a more absurd or fatal delusion, than to acquire correct notions on matters comparatively unimportant, while we throw into the shade, or but faintly apprehend, those truths which are essential to religion, and of everlasting moment. The basis for discussion on Christianity ought to be the Bible. Therein are contained the revelations of Jehovah in their purity. "Every opinion and practice should be set aside which is acknowledged on all

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49 Dick, *Diffusion of Knowledge*, 293.
52 Dick, *Diffusion of Knowledge*, 293.
hands to have no direct foundation in scripture." It is evident that all parties will need to make some concessions before religious union is possible. Among these concessions Dick mentioned the following: a reliance on the Bible for instruction, rather than the various catechisms, must be the guideline; "fast and preparation days previous to the participation in the Lord's Supper; kneeling in the act of partaking of that ordinance; repeating the Athanasian creed in the regular services of the church" should all be done away with; any form of baptism should suffice, whether by sprinkling or dipping. What Dick hoped for was a united Christianity, based on that found in the Bible. "The religion of the Bible requires only to be examined with care, and studied with humility and reverence, in order to produce a full conviction of its celestial origin." The Bible is further said to contain "the will of God, the natural character of man, the remedy of moral evil, the rules of moral conduct."

It must have upset Dick somewhat, feeling so strongly about Christianity and yet feeling that "no Christian church has yet been formed on the principles of a full and unreserved recognition of its precepts and laws, in all their bearing and practical applications." It is this fact, and this alone, which had caused all the disunity within the Church. Not until "the false drapery" has been removed from Christianity will it become truly the religion of Christ. Such a condition as then existed was to end soon, at least if Thomas Dick had any influence.

55 Ibid., 297. 56 Dick, Mental Illumination, 290.
57 Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 297. 58 Ibid., 293.
59 Ibid., 224. 60 Ibid., 210.
61 Dick, Mental Illumination, 12.
The disunion of the Christian Church is not to be perpetual. We are certain, that a period is hastening on when its divisions shall be healed, when its boundaries shall be enlarged, and when 'the name of Jehovah shall be one throughout all the earth.' At some period or other, therefore, in the lapse of time, a movement towards such a union must commence. It cannot take place before the attention of the religious world is directed to this object. And why should not such a movement commence at the present moment?\footnote{Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 295-296. Compare the following by Joseph Smith: "Christians should cease wrangling and contending with each other, and cultivate the principles of union and friendship in their midst." Smith, 314.}

It was for just such a purpose that Thomas Dick wrote. He sought to aid in the education of the common people through his writings. He also sought to demonstrate the rational validity of his Christian faith. By so doing he hoped to bring about the unity of the Christian church, which in turn would aid in the moral renovation of mankind.

In the Introduction to one of his first books Dick wrote that "the author has kept his eye solely on the two Revelations which the Almighty has given to mankind,—THE SYSTEM OF NATURE, and the SACRED RECORDS, just as they stand."\footnote{Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 6.} The purpose for writing his first work was to "illustrate the connection of science and philosophy with religion and with the moral improvement of mankind."\footnote{Dick, Christian Philosopher, dedicatory statement.} All of his works contain a great deal of astronomical information, as well as details of geology, natural history, inventions, etc. His last four works (in three volumes) deal strictly with astronomy and the wonders of God's universe. Throughout all his works is found an attempt to demonstrate God's existence, and the reasonableness of the Christian faith.

Some readers may, perhaps, be disposed to say, 'What has all this theological dissertation to do with astronomy? We do not see that it has any connection with a description of the solar system.' On this point we beg leave to differ from such objectors.
What is the material universe, when separated from its reference to the Creator, and its relation to intelligent beings? A mere machine, which displays nothing but uncontrollable power acting at random, without the least trace of wisdom, benevolence, or rectitude... The relation of the material system to intellectual beings ought, therefore to be connected with astronomical investigations.65

For Dick, science was "nothing else than a rational inquiry into the arrangements and operations of the Almighty, in order to trace the perfections therein displayed."66

Dick displayed in his writings not only an attempt to show his readers the wonders of the universe, but also the importance of the family life and the education of the young. His desire was to educate people, and through their education to improve the moral standards of the world. As indicated earlier he began writing about the proper education of the young and poverty stricken as early as 1809, and continued to write articles upon that subject throughout his life. Several of his later works dealt specifically with education and the moral renovation of mankind. "The more learning a people have, the more virtuous, powerful and happy they will become... Knowledge must prove an inestimable blessing to men of every nation and of every rank."67 Through education ignorance and poverty would be done away with; superstitions eradicated; hatred, greed, covetousness removed from men's personalities. The world would be a safer and more peaceful place in which to live. An aid to the diffusion of knowledge was to be Christianity, but only when

66 Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 164.
67 Ibid., 19.
it was united as Christ intended it to be, a union which man's rational powers indicated must come about.

The previous remarks were intended as a brief introduction to the principles underlying Thomas Dick's philosophy. His goal was the betterment of mankind through an increase of knowledge, and the propagation of the Christian faith. The next three chapters will deal with several aspects of that faith as understood by Dick and taught by him in his books. When, in the course of these chapters, any idea is presented as coming from Dick which approximates the ideas of Joseph Smith, or is in direct opposition to it, knowledge of that relationship will be made in a footnote. The chapter following these three will deal more specifically with the relationship between the theology of Thomas Dick and Joseph Smith, as they are discussed and interpreted by Mrs. Fawn Brodie.
THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

The knowledge of God lies at the foundation of all religion, and of all our prospects in reference to the eternal world, and it must surely be a highly desirable attainment to acquire as glorious and expansive an idea of the object of our adoration, as the finite capacity of our intellects is capable of comprehending.

As this passage indicates, Thomas Dick taught that a "knowledge of God lies at the foundation of all religion;" that is, the Being termed God is at the basis of religious belief. Certainly, for Dick, religion is based strictly about one's attitude towards God and His relationship to man.

Dick was a dualist; i.e., he taught that there were in the universe two basic principles—mind and matter. As Dick was not a systematic theologian, it is difficult to ascertain completely his concept of the nature of these two principles. He never clearly defined either term. It would appear, however, that man is a combination of the two, at least for the present life. God, on the other hand, is strictly Mind. This may be demonstrated by two sources. The first is the choice of terms by which Dick referred to Deity, a few of which were: "Eternal Mind," "Intelligence," "Supreme Intelligence." These, of course, are common terms for Deity, but when combined with the second source of information constitute good evidence concerning his concept of the nature of Deity.

of God. "The Deity is a spiritual, uncompounded substance." By this Dick meant that God is constituted of a single, uncompounded substance. He called that substance "spiritual." Elsewhere he referred to Deity as the "Divine Essence." In another place Dick writes that God is "concealed... in the unfathomable depths of his essence." It appears clear that, for Thomas Dick, God was a spiritual essence, constituted of what Dick called Mind, or Intelligence. That mind is different from any physical, or sensible, object is made clear by Dick's contention that God is "purely IMMATERIAL." Dick also wrote that God is a spiritual uncompounded substance, and consequently invisible to mortal eyes, and impalpable to every other organ of sensation. God cannot be approached or observed by physical, sensible beings or organs. He "is a Being... whom no man hath seen, or can see." This is perhaps as explicit as Dick was able to get on this point: no man has seen or will see God for He is an intangible, invisible Being. "The mind must have some material... objects to rest upon... when it would attempt to form the most definite and comprehensive conceptions of an infinite, eternal and invisible Existence."

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3Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 161. God is a "spiritual and uncreated Essence," Dick, Christian Philosopher, 50.

4Dick, Christian Philosopher, 50.


6Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 212.

7Ibid., 38.

8Dick, Christian Philosopher, 363.
which to operate or form a conception. As God is "immaterial" he cannot be perceived by the mind of man. But God does have attributes, and His existence may be realized. The purpose of the remainder of this chapter will be to describe Dick's characterization of those attributes, which include God's creative powers. The means by which God may be known will also be described, in the present chapter as well as in the following chapter.

Attributes of God

The Deity which Dick recognizes as the Creator and Sustainer of man and the universe is Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. In the majority of references to God, His name is not mentioned; indeed, the term "God" is seldom used. When a name is used, however, it is always Jehovah. He is the Creator of the universe, and Father of all intelligent beings, including Jesus Christ. What are the essential attributes of this Deity whom Thomas Dick worships?

By the natural or essential attributes of God, we understand such perfections as the following:—his eternity, omnipresence, infinite knowledge, infinite wisdom, omnipotence, and boundless beneficence. These are the characters and attributes of Deity. With one exception, these attributes will now be investigated in the order they are given in the above quotation.

God is in many places referred to as the eternal, self-existent Being, independent of all other beings. "God inhabited eternity, before the earth or the heavens were brought into existence."  

9 Ibid., 25.

10 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 28, 85, 87, 155. Cf. Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 209; Mental Illumination, 297; Celestial Scenery, 263; Christian Philosopher, 190.

11 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 212.
God is eternal in every sense of that word. There was never a time when He did not exist, or when He was not God. The term "self-existent" implies this nature—that His existence is not contingent upon any other being, He is completely independent of them all. According to Dick, God is eternal and uncreated. This attribute, of course, implies that God once existed alone, as regards other intelligent beings. More of this concept will be demonstrated later.

The second "essential attribute" of God is His omnipresence. This implies that God's 'being' or essence exists throughout the vast regions of the universe. This is one of the most prevalent attributes of God found in Dick's writings. "The Divine Being fills the immensity of space with his presence." This 'eternal presence' of Deity carries with it several implications. One of these is that God is not a Being with body or parts though He does possess passions or feelings for His creatures. As He is a Being without a body, statements which discuss the "Throne of God" appear paradoxical. How can God inhabit every particle of space and still be spoken of as residing on a throne? This would appear to be the case, however, according to the following statements by Dick: "All the vast systems of the universe... are in rapid and incessant motion around the throne of the Eternal." Elsewhere...

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12 Ibid., 76. Joseph Smith likewise taught that God, as an individual, was eternal, self-existent, and uncreated.


15 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 35.
Dick referred to the "grand center of the universe, the Throne of God." In another place he referred to the "starry firmament, where worlds unnumbered run their ample rounds, where suns revolve around suns, and systems around systems, around the throne of the Eternal." In an interesting passage Dick indicated that "the range of material existence may, indeed, have certain limits assigned to it." Hence, it may have a central place as well, which Dick also indicated. However, the reference to limits on the creation is contradicted (or refuted) in the next sentence where it is stated that if one could conceive of such a limit, it would be possible to know all of God's creations. And to know His creations is "to comprehend the Creator himself." And no man can see or comprehend the Creator. "Could we thoroughly comprehend the depths of his perfections of the grandeur of his empire, he would cease to be God, or we would cease to be limited and dependent beings." Man's inability to comprehend the perfections of God extends into his immortal state. No man will ever completely comprehend the creations of God.

As long as empty space exists, God's power to create will not cease, and no man, mortal or immortal, could keep up with the creative energies of God. Hence the reference to limits to the universe is not to be taken as a literal one, as one held by Dick. He wrote often of the fact that man "can set no bounds to the empire of the Almighty Sovereign."

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16 Dick, Christian Philosopher, 364.
17 Dick, Celestial Scenery, 56-57.
18 Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 247.
20 Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 247ff.
21 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 158. Cf. 212.
Dick also referred to a theory set forth by scientists to the effect that all planetary bodies appear to be circling a particular center far out in space. If this is so, said Dick, it could well be the "Capitol of the Universe... the throne of God." This central space was thought to be "five hundred times larger than all the systems and worlds in the universe."\(^{22}\) These passages, and many others, would seem to indicate that there is a center of the universe at which spot rests a throne upon which resides the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. How can this be possible if God "fills the immensity of space with his presence?" Dick did not resort to the Holy Ghost as a conductor of God's power in order to answer this question (indeed that personage is referred to only once or twice in all Dick's books). The solution to part of the problem has been given: there are no limits to God's empire. This only satisfies part of the problem, however. What of the references to the "Throne of God?" The solution to this seems to be found in statements referring to Him who "sits on the throne of the universe," or "upon the throne of universal nature."\(^{23}\) These statements seem only to imply that the universe is God's throne. This position is further defensible from several other statements Dick makes in an introduction he wrote in 1845. He referred to "the majesty of Him who sits on the throne of the universe."\(^{24}\) He later refers to "him who 'sitteth on the circle of the heavens.'"\(^{25}\) There cannot be a geographic

\(^{22}\)Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 249-251.

\(^{23}\)Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 38, and Philosophy of a Future State, 204.

\(^{24}\)"Introduction", to Burritt, XV.

\(^{25}\)Ibid., XIX. Compare Isaiah 40:22.
center of the universe, for that would require boundaries to be placed on the infinite, a concept which, as previously indicated, was rejected by Dick. There cannot be a 'spiritual' center at which place God resides—He does not possess a body either physical or spiritual; He is omnipresent, existing everywhere. He is a Spirit which fills every bit of the universe, as has been determined earlier. Thus, Dick would appear to be speaking metaphorically when he refers to a center of the universe or to a Throne of God.\textsuperscript{26}

As was shown earlier, God is omnipresent and unobservable. But He can be known. In a continuation of a quotation given above, Dick went on to indicate that God could "be contemplated only through the sensible manifestations he gives of his perfections."\textsuperscript{27} All natural forces are an expression of God's power; they are signs of God's majesty. "His essential glory cannot form an object for the direct contemplation of any finite intelligence."\textsuperscript{28} But He can be known as He moves about His universe. Dick was rather explicit as to why God can only be known by the physical manifestations of Himself in His creations. "The mind of man must have some material, visible or tangible objects to rest upon, and to guide it in its excursions, when it would attempt to form the most definite and comprehensive conceptions of an infinite, eternal and invisible Existence."\textsuperscript{29} Many times Dick stated that matter exists solely for the benefit of mind; i.e., so that mind may have some objects

\textsuperscript{26}References to the Throne of God are frequent in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. See for instance I Nephi 17:39; Alma 18:30, etc.

\textsuperscript{27}Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 38. Compare Joseph Smith in D & C 88:46-47; Alma 30:44; Moses 6:63.

\textsuperscript{28}Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 209.

\textsuperscript{29}Dick, Christian Philosopher, 363.
for its contemplation. God, as explained earlier, is immaterial, and hence cannot be seen. But His existence can be known when He manifests Himself in His creations.

For as God is omnipresent, His Essence prevades, actuates, and supports the whole frame of universal nature, and all the beings it contains, so that he is as intimately present with every created being, whether sensitive or intellectual, as that being is to itself. Although God's essence "prevades" and actuates universal nature, He is not to be identified or equated with these creations. Dick was not a pantheist. He was what philosophers call an Immanent Theist; i.e., "God is both immanent and transcendent with respect to the world." God is other-than the objects He has created, but His essence is to be seen manifested in them.

Beings, constituted like man, whose rational spirits are connected with an organical structure, and who derive all their knowledge through the medium of corporeal organs, can derive their clearest and most affecting notions of the Divinity, chiefly through the same medium; namely, by contemplating the effects of His perfections, as displayed through the ample range of the visible creation.

It is by observing these manifestations that finite minds can come to know God. Even then, however, the knowledge cannot be perfect.

The immense mass of material existence, and the endless variety of sensitive and intellectual beings with which the universe is replenished, are intended by Jehovah, to present to His rational offspring, a shadow, an emblem, or a representation (insofar as finite extended existence can be a representation) of the infinite perfections of His nature, which would otherwise have remained forever impalpable to all subordinate intelligences.

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30 Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 212; Philosophy of Religion, 17.
31 Dick, Christian Philosopher, 60.
34 Ibid., 56-57.
Dick continued by explaining that as man observes nature and increases his knowledge of the universe, so will his knowledge of "God himself be extended." Hence the necessity of all men, particularly Christians, studying geology, astronomy, etc.—to learn of God and His creations.

The next two attributes of God which Dick mentioned were infinite knowledge and infinite wisdom. These are a natural corollary to the omnipresence of Deity. If He is everywhere present, and His basic nature is that of Mind, it follows that His knowledge would be all-encompassing. "The range of God's omniscience... embraces an intimate knowledge of the thoughts, the purposes, and the actions of all creatures."36

The next attribute mentioned, that of God's power, will be investigated in the section on the Creation.

The last attribute mentioned by Dick is that of beneficence, or goodness. This is based upon the idea that God is Love. As the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and its occupants, God naturally loves them. He is not a whimsical God who acts out of spite, or for no evident reason. He does all things which are for the benefit of His children. "God is not an unconcerned Spectator of the ways of man."37 He is concerned with their welfare. That is why He gave man moral laws, and that is why He sent His Son, Jesus Christ.38 It is upon the principle of love that the universe operates. The law of love is similar to

35Ibid., 57.
37Ibid., 75.
38Ibid., 215, where Dick states that Jesus Christ is the son of Jehovah.
the law of attraction; it binds bodies together, whether heavenly bodies or earthly bodies. Dick indicated further that this principle of love "resides originally in the Eternal Mind, and... pervades the minds of all holy intelligences." (The phrase "holy intelligences" refers to angels, not men.) It is upon the principle of love that God operates, and it was for the love of His "rational offspring" that the earth was created.

The Creation

The other attribute of God mentioned by Dick was that of omnipotence. "Omnipotence is that attribute of the Divine Being, by which he can accomplish everything that does not imply a contradiction." This is rather a vague statement for some readers, when Dick applies it to the Creation. For some readers, creating something out of nothing does certainly imply a contradiction. But when it is recognized that God's omnipotence allows Him to "accomplish whatever he pleases," this attribute becomes more understandable. This concept of the omnipotent power of God is so prevalent in Dick's writings that one wonders how Fawn Brodie could be led to state that Dick believed matter was "eternal and indestructible." The present section discusses only the nature of God's creative powers, especially as they relate to this earth.

As has been stated, Dick taught that God is a self-existent being, eternal and uncreated. This attribute does not necessarily rule out the

39 Ibid., 161-162.  
40 Ibid., 190.  
41 Dick, Christian Philosopher, 32.  
42 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 76.  
43 Brodie, 171.
possibility of other beings being also self-existent. Thomas Dick, however, was most emphatic that a time existed when God was indeed alone in the universe. "Innumerable ages before the universe was created, Jehovah existed alone, independent of every other being." Dick also wrote that God existed alone long "before time began." This, of course, is a necessary circumstance if God is to be considered the Creator of the universe, and the Father of its inhabitants, in the traditional sense of those phrases. For instance, the Reverend Alexander Crombie, in an article appearing in the 1831 edition of the *Edinburgh Review* stated that the concept "that the elements of matter are self-existent; and that the self-existence of matter is a sufficient foundation for an infinite succession of formal existents" was an atheistic doctrine. The reason for this is of course that no need for a Creator is necessary if matter is also self-existent. Crombie, however, believed that science and astronomy were beginning to demonstrate that the universe was not meant to be of eternal duration, hence must have had a beginning. As will be seen shortly, Dick agreed essentially with the point made by Crombie, that God alone is self-existent. What of matter, then; or of the stars, or the light which flows from them? Did God have the power to create matter, or merely to organize it into celestial bodies.

44 Joseph Smith taught that man was also self-existent. See Smith, 352,354.


46 Dick, *Diffusion of Knowledge*, 239.


48 Ibid., 150.

49 Ibid., 150-151.
As indicated, God has power to accomplish whatever he pleases. This apparently means that God created matter itself. "In Creation, God brought the universe out of nothing." This aspect of God's power, His ability to create ex nihilo, is very prevalent in Dick's writings. "Vast and magnificent as the structure of the starry heavens is, it was produced without materials—it emerged out of nothing. The voice of the Eternal 'spake, and it was done.' He commanded, and the orbs of the firmament started into being." This is an explicit statement that the heavens "emerged out of nothing." Dick taught that it would lessen God's power to indicate that any principle of mind or matter had co-existed with Him from eternity. Not only did God create matter out of nothing, He also "called the stars, from nothing into existence, and arranged them in the respective stations they occupy." Regarding the source of the light given off by these stars, Dick was a little confusing. He indicated that God "formed the element of light," while maintaining that the stars all "shine by their own native light." But if it is remembered that God originally created the stars then it follows that their native light was created also by God.

When Dick indicated that God dwells in light, yet that He Himself had formed that light, the problem is raised: if God is eternal,

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50Dick, Christian Philosopher, 365. In contrast, Joseph Smith asked, "Why do the learned men who are preaching salvation, say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing? The reason is, that they are unlearned in the things of God, and have not the gift of the Holy Ghost." Smith, 350. Cf. Abraham 3:24.


52Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 214.

53Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 43. Cf. 227-228.

54Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 208.

55Dick, Celestial Scenery, 215.
would not light also be eternal, if He dwells in it? Whether Dick realized there was a seeming contradiction here, cannot be stated. However, in one of his last books he wrote, as if trying to clear up the point:

We are informed, in the sacred history, that light was the first production of the Almighty Creator... For without it the universe would have presented nothing but an immense blank to all sentient existences. Hence, likewise, the Divine being the source of knowledge and felicity to all subordinate intelligences... That Almighty Being who inhabiteth immensity and 'dwells in light inaccessible,' evidently appears to have diffused light over the remotest spaces of his creation, and to have thrown a radiance upon all the provinces of his wide and eternal empire, so that every intellectual being, wherever existing, may feel its beneficent effects, and be enabled, through its agency, to trace his wonderful operations, and the glorious attributes with which he is invested.56

Here it appears that Dick was stating that God did indeed create light, which then became His emblem, or symbol. This becomes consistent with the idea that God once existed alone, and that He possesses all the power He desires. It also makes more clear statements to the effect that there once existed a period, prior to the creation, when "nothing appeared but one immense, dark, and cheerless void."57 This was a period when there was "no sun, nor moon... nor starry firmament... [Then] the voice of God [resounded] through... space, 'LET THERE BE LIGHT; and light was'... Ten thousands of spacious suns instantly lighted up at his command."58 Hence it would appear that God did indeed create light, as well as matter. Dick also wrote that the "Omnipotence" has the power to transform light into a solid substance, if He so desires.59

56Dick, The Practical Astronomer, 19-21. Cf. "In the material creation light was the first substance created." Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 223.

57Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 213.

58Ibid., 227-228. 59Dick, The Practical Astronomer, 43.
These quotations, together with his statement that God created the element of light, would seem to indicate that Dick believed God did indeed create light, including that in which He Himself is said to dwell. All of this is part of God's omnipotence: all that exists, other than Himself, was created by God.

**The Plurality of Worlds**

Perhaps the most frequent doctrine in Dick's writings is his insistence upon a plurality of worlds. It occurs in all of his books, usually mentioned only in passing, as if taken for granted. But in at least two books he has complete sections providing 'proofs' for the existence of many worlds.

Virtually all large celestial bodies, with the possible exception of the "myriads of stars" may be considered as holding intelligent beings, according to Dick. The great number of such bodies may be gathered from the following statement by Dick. "Every star, considered as a sun, may be conceived to be surrounded by at least thirty planetary globes." All of these globes contain rational offspring from the same God, Jehovah.

The reasons, or proofs, given for the existence of intelligent life on other planets were developed in two works. The first of these is in his work, *Celestial Scenery*, published in 1837. Here he devotes over thirty pages to five arguments illustrative of the existence of life on other worlds. Basically, these arguments were: 1) the

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60Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 213. Cf. 57. Also, Christian Philosopher, 38. Joseph Smith also taught a plurality of worlds. See, for instance, Moses 7:30, 36 (first published in *Evening and Morning Star*, August, 1832, 44-47. The two verses appear on page 45.)

magnitude of these celestial bodies renders them capable of sustaining life. There would be no need for such large bodies of matter to exist if intelligent beings were not made to reside upon them. 2) The similarity which exists between all planets in their physical constitution indicates that they were created to serve similar ends: the supporting of intelligent beings. 3) All the planets appear to possess special arrangements, adapting them to support life. 4) The scenes of the universe possible to be seen from each planet (as Dick surmises) are such as to require rational observers. Their beauties would be wasted creations if there were not observers on the various planets. 5) Nature seems destined [created] for the purpose of supporting intelligent beings.62

Three years later Dick published another book, *The Sidereal Heavens*, in which he devoted fifty pages to the plurality of worlds. Here he devised some new arguments to prove that intelligent beings exist elsewhere than on this planet. These arguments are: 1) Such a doctrine increases the idea of the perfections of the Creator. 2) Wherever the power of God is manifest, His other attributes (wisdom, beneficence, etc.) must also be manifest. Hence, where God's power has created planets His wisdom must have had a reason for that creation: the placing of life on that planet. 3) The opposite supposition, that the planets are vast wastelands, is "an absurdity." 4) The Bible teaches a plurality of worlds.63

Such then were Dick's arguments for the existence of many planets inhabited by intelligent offspring. In 1855 an article on the subject,


"The Plurality of Worlds" reviews five of the above nine arguments: three taken from the first book, and two from the latter. No author for the article is named. The article is somewhat critical of the position taken by Dick, and attributes his ideas to Thomas Chalmers, a contemporary Scottish divine. This is unlikely, however, because Dick had been writing on the subject since 1818.

Although the inhabitants of all these other worlds have as their Creator and Father the same God as these beings on this planet (i.e., Jehovah) it appears that they do not necessarily resemble those on this earth. At any rate, their needs may not be the same.

These beings are said to be sentient, endowed with intellectual faculties, possessed of physical bodies, and their attendant capacities: speech, sight, etc. However, these beings may also have differences. They may not need sleep, as on this planet. Powers of locomotion may be different upon other worlds. Dick also referred to "those worlds where moral evil has never entered, where diseases and death are unknown, and where the inhabitants bask perpetually in the regions of immortality." It further appears that this would have been man's present condition had he not fallen.

Perhaps the greatest evidence that all intelligent offspring of Deity are not alike is Dick's statement that these offspring range from

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64 "The Plurality of Worlds" Presbyterian Quarterly Review, III (1855), 572ff. Dick's ideas are discussed on pages 585-586.
65 Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 262-276.
66 Dick, Christian Philosopher, 63.
67 Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 265.
68 Dick, Celestial Scenery, 275.
"the loftiest Seraph to the smallest animalcula." Again this is consistent with the idea that God is the Creator of all reality. Hence all life is descendant from God. Therefore, when Dick referred to human, or earth-like life.

All the planets have been created for the support of intelligent life. Dick taught a doctrine of "endless progression" (which will be dealt with below). The intelligent beings on various planets are apparently in different stages of progression, and are waiting to be "transported to a more expansive sphere of existence." This is likewise the nature of those on this earth.

The Creation of the Earth

Thus far God's creative powers have been related strictly to the universe as a whole. The present section will deal with the creation of the earth.

It has been shown that Dick believed that the universe, stars, and even light, were created out of nothing by God. This means that matter is strictly a creation of God. It follows from this that the earth was created from nothing; at least from matter which had come from nothing. Dick, as a scientist, however, was somewhat impressed by the theories then prevalent regarding the longevity of the earth. He had to reconcile the Bible account with what he read of natural, and geologic, history. He, of course, could not accept the 'atheistic' notion that matter had formed by itself the earth, or the life upon it.

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69 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 85.
70 Dick, Christian Philosopher, 204.
71 See Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 187.
Nor, however, could he reject the traditional idea that man first arrived upon the earth approximately 6000 years ago. The geologists were purporting theories about the great antiquity of the earth, and suggesting non-theistic means for its creation. Dick could not completely reject all of these theories, so he reconciled them with his own theological beliefs. He wrote:

The phrase... 'in the beginning,' is used to denote the commencement of an era, or of a series of successive events. It evidently implies that, at what period soever in the long lapse of past duration, any part of the material creation was brought into existence, it derived that existence from the self-existent and eternal Divinity. But no specific period is here stated.

In another source, Dick wrote that "The scriptures nowhere assert that the materials out of which our globe was arranged were brought from nothing into existence at the period when Moses commences his narrative of the processes which preceded the formation of man." The creation of the earth, then, did not begin six- or seven-thousand years ago. It began innumerable ages ago. And if God chose to use the processes by which the geologists say the earth was created, so be it.

In short, if by all the processes to which we have alluded (i.e., these of the geologists, astronomers, etc.) our globe was gradually prepared for the purposes it now fulfills, and that the Creator chose to employ these rather than the special interposition of miraculous power—such considerations tend to exhibit the power, wisdom, and benevolence of the Deity in a new point of view, and to enlarge our conceptions of the magnificent plans of Him who is 'The King eternal, immortal, and invisible.'

72 "All the physical monuments which exist, and the progressive changes which have happened in the strata of the earth, as well as historical moments, and the concurrent tradition of many nations, bear witness to the truth, that the first appearance of man upon the face of the globe cannot be referred to a period farther back than five or six thousand years from the present time." Christian Philosopher, 196.

73 Ibid., 190. 74 Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 232.

75 Dick, Christian Philosopher, 193.
Nevertheless, the earth, in its present form, capable of bearing living beings, "had no existence at a period seven thousand years beyond the present." What all this means is that, innumerable ages in the past, God brought out of nothing matter, which, through the ages, evolved into a condition capable of sustaining intelligent life. It reached that stage about 6000 years ago. This, Dick believed, was consistent with the Bible account of the Creation. He not only found this consistent with the Bible, he found fault with those who reject his concept of the creation. He writes:

It is therefore to be regretted that certain theologians should still persist in maintaining that the whole material creation must be limited to a period within 6000 years from this date, when Scripture is silent on this point; for in so doing they put an argument into the hands of the philosophical infidel, which it is in his power to wield against the truth and authority of revelation.

In a rather interesting passage Dick summed up his attitude regarding the creation.

All the bodies comprehended under this general expression /heaven and earth/, are here said to have been created, that is, brought from nothing into existence by the energy of an eternal and omnipotent Agent. The original Hebrew word... Bara, does not indeed necessarily convey this idea, as it most frequently signifies 'to produce something new or wonderful,' or 'to arrange, to renovate, or new-model' something which was previously in existence. It is a matter of rational inference, however, and strictly accordant with just philosophical principles, that the material universe was created out of nothing. It is such an inference as cannot be resisted without doing violence to the fundamental laws of human belief. This magnificent frame of the universe is here said to have been brought into existence by God—the God of Israel, the self-existent and eternal Jehovah. This declaration was intended to teach the Israelites, and all others, that the material world, as to its

76 Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 239.
77 Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 232.
78 Dick, Christian Philosopher, 191.
original atoms, did not arise without a cause, or out of pre-existent materials; that the beautiful order it now exhibits did not originate from the fortuitous concourse of atoms, as as some heathen philosophers imagined, and that it did not derive its existence from any of the gods of the nations, as some of their blinded worshipers foolishly imagined.79

Dick mentioned that the earth was not created out of "pre-existent" materials. By this he apparently means eternal materials. As has been shown, he felt that the matter used in making this earth existed for a long period prior to the culmination of the creation process 6000 years ago. Dick rejected also the notion of a 'spiritual' creation preceding the physical creation of the earth, hence the use of the phrase "pre-existent" could indicate a rejection of this form of creation.

As the purpose for the creation of the earth involves man, it will provide the introductory section for the next chapter.

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79Ibid., 189-190. Joseph Smith wrote that "the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter, which is element... Element had an existence from the time [God] had... They had no beginning, and can have no end." Smith, 350-352. Cf. Abraham 3:24.
The Purpose of Creation

In the last chapter it was pointed out that God once existed by Himself. There was a time when neither matter nor mind existed (other than God, who was Himself Mind). Why then did God create earths, and sentient beings? Having created this earth, what was its condition prior to the Fall? Dick supplied an answer, though not a complete one, to the question, why a creation at all. "The creation of such a vast universe must have been chiefly intended to display the perfection of the Deity, and to afford gratification and felicity to the intellectual beings he has formed."¹ God, then, created the universe to display His perfections to the "intellectual beings" He had formed. When these beings were formed, or where they were formed, or even why they were formed are questions the answers to which are not to be found in Dick's writings. Whether these sentient beings must have existed prior to the creation of matter is not possible to determine for certain. As indicated, matter exists only for the benefit of mind. "The material universe exists solely for the sake of sentient and intelligent beings... The operations of mind cannot be carried on without the intervention of external objects; for if the material universe had never existed, we could never have prosecuted a train of thought."² It appears that man, or his prototype, was created first and then matter secondly. Perhaps, as God

¹Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 62.
²Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 17.
considered His future creations He realized the necessity of mind needing matter, and created the two simultaneously. Dick was never clear on this point. He does provide further reasons as to why there was a creation of the universe.

The Creator stands in no need of innumerable assemblages of worlds and of inferior ranks of intelligences, in order to secure or to augment his felicity. Innumerable ages before the universe was created, he existed alone, independent of every other being, and infinitely happy in the contemplation of his own eternal excellencies. No other reason, therefore, can be assigned for the production of the universe, but the gratification of his rational offspring, and that he might give a display of the infinite glories of his nature to innumerable orders of intelligent creatures. Ten thousand times ten thousand suns, distributed throughout the regions of immensity, with all their splendid apparatus of planets, comets, moons, and rings, can afford no spectacle of novelty to expand and entertain the Eternal Mind; since they all existed, in their prototypes, in the plans and conceptions of the Deity, during the countless ages of a past eternity.

In this quotation Dick indicated that God contemplated the creation for a long period of time before He undertook the task. It may be that this was the first 'home' of man, also. In other words, the rational offspring for whose benefit the universe was created may not have been created physically when the universe was first formed. The universe may have been created in anticipation of the intelligent beings who would shortly inhabit it. At any rate, the universe was created to demonstrate the beauties and perfections of God to His offspring. That everything that exists is as it should be, is evidenced by the statement that all things have their prototype in the mind of God. Dick re-emphasized this in another book.

As the conceptions existing in the mind of an artificer are known by the instruments he constructs, or the operations he performs, so the ideas which have existed from eternity in

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the mind of the Creator are ascertained from the objects he has created, the events he has produced, and the operations he is incessantly conducting. The formation of a single object is an exhibition of the idea existing in the Creating Mind, of which it is a copy.4

These quotations which have been given are virtually the only indications Dick gave as to why the earth was created. Matter, and therefore the earth, was created for the benefit of God's rational offspring. Exactly why God needed or wanted these offspring is not clear, except to say that God wanted intelligent beings to observe His perfections. This makes the argument circular, but as Dick never made the point any more clear than that just given, it is the best that can be hoped for with present information.

Dick did explain, however, that the earth exists pretty much as God intended that it should.

The earth upon which we tread was evidently intended by the Creator to support man and other animals, along with their habitations, and to furnish those vegetable productions which are necessary for their subsistence; and accordingly, he has given it that exact degree of consistence which is requisite for these purposes... Had this circumstance not been attended to in its formation, the earth would have been rendered useless as a habitable world for all those animated beings which traverse its different regions.5

The Origin of Man

Part of the problem concerning man's origin has been investigated in the previous section, and part in the previous chapter. This section will repeat some of that information and then investigate why man is on earth, what his condition was when he first arrived, and what his responsibilities are while here.

4Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 175-176.

As has been demonstrated man had no pre-earth life. God existed alone before He created man. Man's prototype existed in the mind of God from eternity but that prototype was nothing more than a thought or a mental image. It had no substance to it, and was not of a material nature. In fact, Dick stated specifically that this present life is the "first stage in man's existence."6

It has also been mentioned that man possesses a dual nature. "Man is a compound being; his nature consists of two essential parts, body and mind."7 Mind is elsewhere described as "spiritual principle."8 It will be recalled that the essence of God is Mind. What then is the relationship of man's soul ("mind") to God Himself? Mind (with a capital 'M', i.e., God) is said to be immaterial. The same is apparently true of the mind element in mind. "The soul [i.e., mind] contains no principle of dissolution within itself, since it is an immaterial uncompounded substance."9 Mind is further said to be that which gives "motion and beauty to every material scene."10 Hence, it can be deduced that the mind principle in man is what gives motion to his physical body, thus making of him an animated, intelligent being. Dick also wrote that man's "intellectual principle and faculties must be communicated by the immediate inspiration of the Almighty."11

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6Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 98.
7Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 181.
8Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 180.
9Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 105.
10Ibid., 104.
11Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 187.
Man, as stated before, was placed upon the earth within the past six thousand years. Exactly why man was created or placed on the earth is difficult to determine from Dick's writings. This point has also been made previously. That man is not now in his native condition, or that condition in which he was first created, is evident from several passages in the writings of Dick. He wrote that, when man was created, he was "in a state of innocence or . . . moral rectitude." He was, at that time, "without any natural bias to moral evil." 12

Man was originally formed after the moral image of his Maker. His understanding was quick and vigorous in its perceptions; his will subject to the divine law, and to the dictates of his reason; his passions serene and uncontaminated with evil; his affections dignified and pure; his love supremely fixed upon his Creator; and his joy unmingled with those sorrows which have so long been the bitter portion of this degenerate race. 13 That man was meant to remain in that condition is apparent from Dick's remarks regarding the inhabitants of other worlds:

Reasoning from the benevolence of the Deity, it is more probable to conclude that the inhabitants of our world are almost the only intelligences throughout the universe who have swerved from the path of original rectitude, and violated the moral laws of their Maker. 14 Dick taught that these other intelligences have most probably retained their original innocence. It appears likely that the angels are among those who have retained their original purity. Dick wrote that though they are "more than four thousand years old" they "are endowed with

12Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 277.

13Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 299.

14Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 84. This is the normal position taken by Dick. See further, Philosophy of Religion, 249, and Introduction to Burritt, XX. But occasionally he seems to imply that a few others might also have fallen. See for instance, Celestial Scenery, 149. Compare Moses 7:36.
unfading and immortal youth." Man was apparently equal to the angels until he fell from grace. The angels "kept their first estate," but man fell into transgression.

The Fall

Dick indicated that evil "was introduced into the universe." For it to have come from outside the universe is, of course, an impossibility. Therefore, it seems most likely, that it was introduced from within, by the moral agents which God had created. "God has endued man with ... moral perceptions and capacities ... so that he can choose to perform the one class of actions and ... refrain from the other." It was as a result of this moral agency that man's first parents fell.

Our first parents commenced their apostasy from their Maker by coveting the fruit of 'the tree of knowledge,' which he had expressly interdicted under the highest penalty. ... they dared to put forth their hands to the forbidden fruit, from the covetous propensity of enjoying what was not their own, and the ambitious desire of being 'like the gods, and knowing good and evil.'

This account is little different than most traditional attitudes regarding the fall of man. It implies, however, that man had his agency and exercised it in the Garden by opposing God's will.

Thomas Dick had some interesting ideas regarding the effects which the fall had on the earth. Apparently the atmosphere was altered with


16Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 63.

17Dick, Sidereal Heavens, 227.

18Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 100.

the fall.

Our atmosphere exhibits evident marks of Divine wisdom and benevolence; but it is adapted to man considered as in a state of depravity and imperfection, and appointed to a short mortal existence and is not fitted to preserve him in an immortal existence in the present state, as was probably the case when this world was first arranged, and when man proceeded from the hands of his Creator as a holy being. 20

Another change apparently took place in the seasons of the year.

We have no reason to believe that the seasons, as they now exist, would have presented the same aspects, or operated in the same manner had man remained in his primeval innocence and allegiance to his Maker. A great change seems to have taken place in this and other respects at the period of the universal deluge. 21

Here Dick implied that the change came about as a result of the Flood, or at least at the time of the Flood, but it would not have come about had man not first fallen.

A further result of the fall was the creation of volcanoes, earthquakes, storms and tempests. They also became operative following the Flood. 22

Perhaps the greatest evidence of how the fall has affected man, is the condition he would have been in had he not fallen. "if man had continued in his primitive state of integrity, he would have been forever exercised in tracing the power, the beneficence, and other attributes of deity in the visible creations." 23 This, as mentioned earlier, is apparently the condition found on most other worlds, where man has not come under subjection to sin. This also gives meaning to Dick's statement

20Dick, Atmosphere, 43.
that "man has frustrated the end of his existence."\textsuperscript{24}

A further result is that the "race of Adam... can no longer hold familiar intercourse... with intelligences endowed with moral perfection." Beings from other planets, who have retained their moral perfection, cannot communicate with those on this planet who have lost theirs.\textsuperscript{25}

One of the greatest examples of God's beneficence was His activity following the fall regarding man. Though man had violated God's will and placed himself into an inferior position to his created state, God still loved man.

Though all the apostate inhabitants of our world might have been forever annihilated without being missed amidst the immensity of creation, yet, amazing to relate! the joyful announcement was made to our rebellious race, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Soon after the fall of man this glorious intelligence was announced; and in every succeeding age God raised up a succession of prophets to announce the coming of the great Deliverer.\textsuperscript{26}

As a result of man's fallen condition it was necessary to send the Christian gospel that man might possess the proper knowledge of Deity, and achieve happiness. Christianity would have been unnecessary had man not fallen.\textsuperscript{27} How much of the Christian message was sent to the early inhabitants of this globe Dick did not say. It is of interest, though, to note that they were aware of Christ's future redemptive act at that early date.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 336. \textsuperscript{25}Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 233.

\textsuperscript{26}Dick, Solar System, 205.

\textsuperscript{27}Dick, Christian Philosopher, 25-26.

\textsuperscript{28}Compare Joseph Smith in Moses 6:51-68. This was first published in Evening and Morning Star, March 1833, pages 445-446.
Despite man's noble beginnings, and despite God's interest in him, man's present condition is something less than perfection. Dick summed up his attitude regarding man in one short, succinct passage: "Man—that puny worm of the dust."29 The rational inhabitants of other worlds have retained their moral purity, and peace is the condition of their present environment. Man on this earth, however, has fallen from that state and is considered among the lowest of God's intelligent creatures.30

Man's moral depravity is one of the most prevalent themes in the writings of Thomas Dick. It is found on virtually every page (with the exception of his astronomical works). Dick defended his thesis regarding man's depravity by citing scripture and by referring to the activities of mankind. The activities of men demonstrate that "during a period of more than five thousand eight hundred years, the greater part of the human race have been left solely to the guidance of their rational powers."31 Despite the fact that God had revealed to men, shortly after the fall, His gospel, most men had forgotten this message and were left to their own devices. As a result of having been left to their own devices, men "have displayed the operation of the most diabolical passions, indulged in a continual warfare, and desolated the earth with rapine and horrid carnage." This is a grave indication of "the depravity of our species."32

29Dick, Solar System, 202. See also "Introduction" to Burritt, XIX. In Philosophy of a Future State, Dick referred to man as a "worm of the dust" and a "worm of the earth." See pages 277, 280.

30"Although he is a creature who derived his existence from a superior Being... man stands near the lowest part of the scale of intelligent existence." Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 87. Compare Moses 7:36; 1:10; II Nephi 10:3.

Man's depravity has been caused mainly by the fall of man. Even so, men have had enough direction that they should have done better than they have. Having been given the gospel in an early period, men should have been led to live more enlightened lives. As indicated in the introduction to Thomas Dick, however, he believed that the principles of the Christian gospel had never been fully tried by any group of people. Christianity, if it had been practiced, could have lifted the veil of bondage and sin from man.\textsuperscript{33}

Man was not left with just the Gospel to guide him. Where it failed to produce the desired results God had given another means by which man could have improved his lot if he had so desired. This was man's intellect. As indicated earlier man is possessed of a dual nature—mind and body. The body possesses sense organs for pleasure, and to serve as inlets of knowledge. But man is also "endowed with intellectual powers... with faculties of a higher order, and which admit more varied and sublime gratifications than those which the senses can produce... Such pleasures are pure and refined; they are congenial to the character of a rational being; they are more permanent than mere sensitive enjoyments."\textsuperscript{34} All men enjoy these more refined intellectual powers, and they are benefitted by exercising them. Dick saw the Christian religion, as well as science (when properly used), as the servants of God in aiding the development of man's intellect.

The Christian religion has given man the correct knowledge which can raise men to new heights on this earth, and prepare him for the next world.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., 292.

\textsuperscript{34}Dick, \textit{Diffusion of Knowledge}, 81.
Man is a being destined for eternity. The present world through which he is traveling is only a transitory scene, introductory to a future and an immortal existence...
The nursery of our future and eternal existence, as a state of probation in which we are educating for an immortal life, and as preparatory to our entering on higher scenes of contemplation and enjoyment.35

Because this life is passing man should not be concerned about storing up earthly things.36 Men should become as well-to-do as possible, of course, but only if they help further God's will be so becoming. They should study God's movements and His creations, for the purpose of aiding others, through the diffusion of this knowledge. But to improve the physical condition of man as a sensitive being, and to enlarge his knowledge as an intellectual, while we overlook his eternal interests, is to neglect one of the most important duties of Christian philanthropy. The sensitive enjoyments of man are conducive to his happiness so long as they continue; and 'knowledge is pleasant to the soul.' But what are all the acquisitions and enjoyments of time, when compared with the concerns of eternity! and what will they avail, if their possessor be found unqualified for the employments of an endless life! If the soul of man be an immortal principle, and if the least danger exists of its being deprived, through ignorance and guilt, of happiness in the future world, no words can express the importance which ought to be attached to this 'labor of love.'37

"Man is a being destined for eternity." This quality in man, his immortal nature, overrides his present state of depravity. Due to his immortal nature, and his relationship to his Creator, every other man is commanded to treat him with respect, regardless of his present position in life.

The consideration of the eternal destiny of mankind reflects a dignity on the meanest human being, and attaches an importance to all our affections and actions in relation to him, unspeakably greater than if his existence were circumscribed

36Dick, "Introduction," in Burritt, XIX.
37Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 186-187.
within the narrow limits of time, and throws completely into the shade all the degrading circumstances with which he is now surrounded.\footnote{Ibid., 124.}

It can be seen that, although man has fallen from his original innocence, and is in a state of moral degradation, he is nevertheless a child of God and when being dealt with deserves the greatest respect. When one man does so deal with his fellow man "he contributes to his own individual happiness, and, at the same time, to that of all the moral intelligences in heaven and earth, with which he is connected."\footnote{Ibid., 127.}

Thomas Dick was a Christian philanthropist. He sought to improve the well-being of his fellowmen. He believed Christianity would cure many of this life's ills, as well as prepare men for the next life. He further believed that a "diffusion of knowledge" would make men aware of God's activities in the universe. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, Dick taught that the more knowledge and understanding of the universe that a man gained in this life, the more advantage he will have in the world to come. There is a direct relationship between what a man learns in this world and how quickly he progresses in the next. This relationship makes it requisite upon all men to improve not only their own lot, but to seek to improve that of other men. Dick taught that most men must have their energies directed towards "noble and benevolent objects" before they will seek improvement.\footnote{Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 11.}

This was to be the purpose of all men who loved God and their fellowman, and who loved the creations of God as demonstrated by scientific pursuits.\footnote{Ibid., 17.}
The Prospect of Annihilation

It has been indicated that God's omnipotent power has enabled Him to create, out of nothing, the entire universe, including mind, matter, and light. Having been responsible for the creation of these substances, does He also possess the power to annihilate them back into their original nothing? Brodie thinks that Dick believed matter to be "eternal and indestructible."\(^{42}\) This section will investigate the subject of the possible annihilation of man, as taught by Thomas Dick.

It has been indicated that Dick taught that man was "destined for eternity;" that men should treat other men in the light of their being immortal persons, destined for higher things than this earth would seem to indicate. Does this mean that men are inherently immortal? or that they have an inherent right to live eternally? In a passage recently quoted Dick wrote that "all the apostate inhabitants of our world might have forever been annihilated" as a result of the fallen condition they found themselves in. Is this passage correct as it stands, and does it convey the meaning Dick wanted it to; or did Dick mean to imply that men could, or should, have been destroyed from off the face of this earth, and sent to the eternal world, as a result of their sinful condition? The answer to that question, in regards to the above statement is not clear. That man has no inherent right to immortality is very clear, however, "The soul's immortality cannot necessarily be inferred from its natural capacity of existing in a state of separation from the body; for that Being who created it may, if he pleases, reduce it to annihilation."\(^{43}\) This is an important point, for "the soul contains no principle of dissolution within itself, since it is an immaterial

\(^{42}\)Brodie, 171. \(^{43}\)Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 120-121.
The soul of man cannot dissolve itself, for it is immaterial and uncompounded. To do so would be to reduce itself to nothing. It appears, however, that God does have the power to annihilate the soul of man. This power also has grave consequences for the existence of matter, the existence of which is based on the existence of mind (which constitutes the soul of man). Concerning matter Dick asked two very pertinent questions: "Can we suppose that the material universe will exist while intelligent minds [i.e., souls], for whose improvement it was reared, are suffered to sink into annihilation?" And again, "Is it consistent with the common dictates of reason to admit, that matter shall have a longer duration than mind, which gives motion and beauty to every material scene?"

It will be recalled that matter was created solely for the benefit of mind; so that mind might have something upon which to rest when it seeks to know God. There is no other reason for the existence of matter. Can matter, then, exist if mind has been annihilated? The answer is a strong and clear, No! Dick wrote that "matter appears to be indestructible." He believed that the science of chemistry gave that impression. Chemistry, it would seem, did not know the power of God, however. "That Being, indeed, who created matter at first, may reduce it to nothing when he pleases." It should be remarked that Dick believed that "it is in the highest degree improbable, that the thinking principle in man will be destroyed."
He also taught that "God... will, in all probability, continue the material universe forever in existence." Dick believed this to be so, not because man is inherently immortal, nor because God lacks the power to annihilate man, but rather, because God does nothing in vain. "But to annihilate, and again to create, would be operating in vain." Further, God's benevolence and love for His creatures will cause Him to permit them to live eternally. Hence, the statements that "man is a being destined for eternity" are not due to man's having earned that right, but because God wills it. Nonetheless, God may will otherwise and completely annihilate matter, and the soul of man. He has that power.

In summary, though man was among God's most noble creations, the fall placed him among the lowest of God's rational offspring. Despite his present depravity man is a being destined for eternity. Therefore he is to be treated with the greatest respect in this life, while all attempts are made which are necessary to prepare him for eternity. The most important steps are the propagation of the true Christian faith, and the "diffusion of knowledge."

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50 Ibid., 122. 51 Dick, Christian Philosopher, 277. 52 See Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 120-121. 53 Joseph Smith disagreed strongly with this concept. See his remarks in Smith, 350-354. 54 For Dick's attitude regarding Christianity and its importance in one's life, please see pages 18-26, herein.
THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Next to the Being of a God, the doctrine of the immortality of man lies at the foundation of all religions, and of all the animating prospects which can cheer us in this land of our pilgrimage.1

Arguments for the Existence of a Future State

Although Thomas Dick taught that the doctrines of God and immortality lie at the foundation of all religions, he nevertheless found it necessary to put forth several arguments in order to prove the existence of a future state. Most of these arguments are contained in his work, The Philosophy of a Future State, and were, basically, as follows:

1) The fact that virtually all nations or tribes of people have believed in the doctrine "forms a presumptive proof of the immortality of man."2 Its absence from the Old Testament is accounted for by the fact "that it was a truth so well understood, so generally recognized, and so essential to the very idea of religion, that it would have been superfluous to have dwelt upon it in detail, or to have brought it forward as a new discovery."3 In other words, the ancient Hebrews accepted the doctrine of an immortal soul so strongly, that it would have been "superfluous" to have written about it.

2) "The human mind is so constituted that, when left to its native unbiased energies, it necessarily infers the existence of a Supreme Intelligence, from the existence of matter, and the economy of the material world; and, from the nature of the

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2Ibid., 23-24. "We can scarcely suppose, in consistence with the Divine perfections, that an error, on a subject of so vast importance to mankind, should obtain the universal belief of all nations and ages, and that God himself would suffer a world of rational beings, throughout every generation, to be carried away by a delusion, and to be tantalized by a hope which has no foundation in nature, and which is contrary to the plan of his moral government." Ibid., 30.

3Ibid., 127.
human faculties, and the moral attributes of God, it is almost as infallibly led to conclude, that a future existence is necessary, in order to gratify the boundless desires of the human soul.\(^4\)

3) Man has an inherent desire for achieving immortality which must be gratified, or the benevolence of God would be undermined. He would be looked upon as a Being who "takes delight in tantalizing his creatures with hopes and expectations which will end in eternal disappointment."\(^5\)

4) "Can we ever suppose, in consistency with Divine Wisdom and Benevolence, that God has implanted in the human constitution benevolent active powers, which are never to be fully expanded, and that those godlike characters that have occasionally appeared on the theatre of our world, are never to reappear on the field of action, to expatiate, in the full exercise of their moral powers, in the ample career of immortality? To admit such a supposition would be in effect to call in question his Wisdom and Intelligence."\(^6\) There must be a period when these honorable men may continue their good works. That period is the immortal one following this life.

5) The next argument is essentially Kantian in nature. Good men go unrewarded in this life, while the wicked receive earthly blessings. Based on the benevolence of God, Dick felt this wrong must be righted in the eternal world.\(^7\)

6) In another book Dick indicated that man must have a future state in which to further observe the immensity of God's creation. Man lacks that capacity in the present world.\(^8\)

It would appear that these arguments are meant for those who do not already accept the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Dick himself accepted the doctrine as self-evident in scripture, as well as

\(^4\) Ibid., 31-32.

\(^5\) Ibid., 38. "It cannot be admitted, in consistency with the attributes of God, that he will finally disappoint the rational hopes and desires of the human soul, which he himself has implanted and cherished." "Ibid., 62.

\(^6\) Ibid., 70.

\(^7\) Ibid., 98. For a discussion of Immanuel Kant's Ethical Theology, see George F. Thomas, Religious Philosophies of the West (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1965), 246-253.

\(^8\) Dick, Celestial Scenery, 200-201.
in nature. As observed in the previous chapter, man "is endowed with an immortal nature, and is capable of being raised to the dignity of an inhabitant of heaven." Dick taught that the "Resurrection of Christ . . . rested upon a weight of evidence so great, that the rejection of it would be almost equivalent to the adoption of universal skepticism." As a result of the mediation of Jesus Christ "all the inhabitants of our globe, from Adam to the end of time . . . shall be reanimated by the voice of the Son of God, and shall appear each in his own proper person and identical body, before God, the Judge of all." Following this judgment the righteous and the wicked will be separated from each other for eternity. These are facts which Dick apparently took for granted, though he did see evidences for immortality in God's creations, and sought proofs of immortality for the benefit of the unbelieving.

Although Dick believed that all men were destined for eternity, that belief was based, not on the immortal nature of the soul, but on the goodness of the grace of God. As indicated earlier, the soul of man, like God, is an uncompounded substance; therefore, it "may exist in a separate state, in the full exercise of its powers, after its corporeal tenement is dissolved. But its immortality cannot necessarily be inferred from its natural capacity of existing in a state of separation from the body. . . Its immortality depends solely on the will of its soul."
Man is destined for eternity, not by any inherent right to that status, but because God wills it. But God may refuse to allow a man to continue and may annihilate him if He so desires. Thomas Dick believed, however, that due to God’s benevolent nature, and to the fact that the process of creating, destroying, and creating again is all in vain, and since God does nothing in vain, He will not annihilate the soul of man.

Means of Attaining Salvation

The main means of attaining salvation is, of course, the Christian faith. Now, we maintain that Christianity, in every point of view in which its revelations may be considered, is a subject of paramount importance. It is every thing, or it is nothing. It must reign supreme over every human pursuit, over every department of science, over every passion and affection, or be discarded altogether, as to its authority over man. It will admit of no compromises; for the authority with which it professes to be invested is nothing less than the will of the Eternal, whose sovereign injunctions the inhabitants of earth and the hosts of heaven are bound to obey. If its claims to a divine origin can be disproved, then it may be set aside as unworthy of our regard, and ranked along with the other religions which have prevailed in the world. But, if it is admitted to be a revelation from the Creator of the universe to man on earth, its claims are irresistible, it cannot be rejected with impunity, and its divine principles and maxims ought to be interwoven with all our pursuits and associations.\(^\text{15}\)

Dick was a Christian and held strongly to that brand of faith. "Christianity is a revelation from God to man, and... its truths are to be believed, and its precepts practised by all to whom they are addressed."\(^\text{16}\)

As indicated in the introductory chapter Dick had his own ideas as to what constituted the true or necessary attributes of the Christian faith.

\(^{14}\)Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 120-121.

\(^{15}\)Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 303.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., 225-226.
Dick wrote that "the foundation of future felicity must be laid in 'repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.' We must be convinced of our sin and depravity as descendants of the first Adam." Man must place his faith in Jesus Christ as his redeemer, and then repent of the sins he has inherited from his father Adam. Dick's attitude regarding baptism was already mentioned. Whether he felt it was even necessary is not indicated, though the means by which it is done is of no great importance to him.

The way one lives his life is of great importance, however. Dick was concerned about the moral standards of man, and throughout his writings he sought to help people to raise their level of living.

The general path of duty is plain to every one who is inclined to walk in it; and whoever wishes to be assisted and directed in his progress towards moral perfection, will find, in the Proverbs of Solomon, the sermons of Jesus Christ, and the practical parts of the apostolic epistles, maxims, and precepts, and motives inculcated infinitely superior in regard both to their authority and their excellence, to those of all other systems of moral philosophy, whether in ancient or in modern times.18

In another passage Dick wrote of the importance of the Bible as a guideline for man's life.

It is in the sacred oracles alone that the will of God, the natural character of man, the remedy of moral evil, the rules of moral conduct, and the means of moral improvement, are clearly and fully unfolded. And the man who either rejects the revelations of Heaven, or refuses to study and investigate the truths and moral requisitions they contain, can never expect to rise to the sublime heights of virtue and to the moral dignity of his nature. But were the study of the Scriptures uniformly conjoined with the study of every other branch of useful knowledge, we should, ere long, behold a wonderful transformation upon the face of the moral world.19

17Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 269.
18Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 193.
Living by the precepts laid down in these writings a man may prepare himself in this life to enter the next in good stead. Dick indicated further that these religious precepts were to be carried into every activity of life, whether religious devotion, or secular affairs.

The major emphasis in Dick's writings was regarding the moral renovation of mankind. Even his more scientific writings are for the purpose of demonstrating God's wisdom and benevolence. By so doing he hoped to induce a greater religious attitude in his readers. But he did seek to increase man's general knowledge of the world, and the universe about him. When man leaves this life he carries with him, not only his moral faculties, but also his intellectual faculties, including "all that knowledge which he acquires in the present state." If there are any distinctions between men in the future state, they will be based on the fact that some men hold "superior intellectual views." So the attainment of correct intelligence about the universe is important.

Those who have made progress in such studies [science, astronomy], under the influence of holy dispositions, may be considered as fitted to enter heaven with peculiar advantages, as they will then be introduced to employments and investigations to which they were formerly accustomed, and for which they were prepared—in consequence of which they may be prepared for filling stations of superior eminence in that world, and for directing the views and investigations of their brethren who enjoyed few opportunities of instruction and improvement in the present state.

20"One of the chief designs of the salvation proclaimed in the Gospel [25] to prepare us for engaging in such noble exercises" as will occupy the minds of immortal beings. Christian Philosopher, 25.

21Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 195. Compare Doctrine and Covenants 130:17-18; Alma 34:34.

22Dick, "Introduction," to Burritt, XX-XXI.
Man's heart must be devoid of "degrading and immoral passions," however, or all the scientific knowledge in the world will not help him.\(^2\)

Basically, then, Dick's philosophy regarding the requisites for eternal happiness was the acquisition of as much correct and true knowledge as possible, while retaining the humility of one who has truly accepted Christ as his Savior.

**Location of Heaven**

Those who enter heaven are said to bow down and worship God on His throne. As indicated earlier, God Himself is not capable of residing on a throne, unless the throne is considered to be the entire universe. There seems to be some justification for believing that such was Dick's position.\(^2^4\) Since God's essence pervades the universe it follows that heaven encompasses the entire universe also. Man will have a resurrected body, however, and must therefore have a planetary body on which to reside. Dick indicated that this present earth will be renovated, or new-modeled, but not for the purpose of housing its present inhabitants in their future homes. It will apparently be used for other enlightened beings.\(^2^5\) Dick believed that "the earth on which we now dwell shall be wrapt up in devouring flames, and its present form and constitution forever destroyed; that its redeemed inhabitants, after being released from the grave, shall be transported to a more glorious region."\(^2^6\) Dick wrote elsewhere that man must "be transported from amidst the ruins of the globe to his celestial habitation."\(^2^7\)

\(^2^3\)Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 25.  
\(^2^4\)See above, pages 30-33.  
\(^2^5\)Dick, Christian Philosopher, 277.  
\(^2^6\)Ibid., 25.  
\(^2^7\)Dick, Philosophy of Religion. 39.
Dick never indicated where that habitation will be, only that it will be "in another region of space." He did indicate, however, that it will not be man's permanent home for all eternity. Reasons as to why man might be moved from one home to another in eternity will be indicated in the next section.

As might be expected, Dick said very little about the condition of the wicked and unrepentant. His desire was to bring them to repentance, rather than describing their future misery. It may be surmised from the distinctions that will prevail in the next world that those who gain less knowledge, or who adhere to incorrect knowledge, will be among the lower ranks among future intelligences. Likewise, those who have not been morally renovated will be less fortunate in the next life.

It must, indeed, be admitted that all the inhabitants of our world will not be exalted to dignity and happiness in the future state. A great proportion of them, in their present state of depravity and degradation, are altogether unqualified for participating in the exercises and enjoyments of celestial intelligences.

Dick believed that "he who is unjust shall remain unjust still, and he who is filthy shall remain filthy still." These expressions seem evidently to imply, that no more opportunity will be granted for reforming what has been amiss, and recovering the polluted and unrighteous soul to purity and rectitude." Dick also indicated that the condition of such a person will be one of "degradation and misery." He indicated that they will be consigned to a dark corner of the universe, where

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28 Dick, "Introduction," to Burritt, XV.
29 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 158-159.
30 Ibid., 125.
31 Dick, Diffusion of Knowledge, 222.
32 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 123.
clouds will cover their abode preventing them from seeing God's glory. All of man's sensations will be reversed; i.e., all sensations of touch will become painful; sounds will be exceedingly loud, etc. Other than these few statements, Dick wrote little about the condition of the unrepentant. He is mostly interested in describing the blessings of those who do repent.

The Nature of the Future State

The exact nature of man's body in the next world is unclear in Dick's writings. Man will be resurrected, presumably in his present body. At any rate, he will be conscious of his own personal identity, whether in the same body or in another body, especially adapted for his activities in the eternal world. Dick implied in one place that man may indeed possess a different body in the next world. He was certain that the organs of vision in man's eternal body will be much more powerful than they are now.

It would seem apparent that a resurrected body would be one defined by the term "infinite." That term seems to be used only when describing God, however, and never man. In one place Dick even referred to man, when in the future world, as being a "finite intelligence." If man is still considered a finite being in that world it may be, as

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33Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 259.

34"In passing into that world we shall not lose any of the mental faculties we now possess, nor shall we lose our identity, or consciousness of being the same persons we now feel ourselves to be." Diffusion of Knowledge, 213.

35The soul's "Creator can...invest it with a new organical frame, suited to the expansive sphere of action to which it is destined." Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 121-122.

36Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 261.
indicated earlier, that his existence, even in the future state, still depends entirely upon the will of its Creator. Concerning man's faculties Dick wrote that "the most exalted beings in the universe... are continually dependent for their exercise on God's sustaining energy." Hence, even in that life man may be annihilated; which condition certainly makes him finite.

Dick made a few references to the conditions under which man will be operating in the future state. He indicated that "heaven is a social state." People will have the same social intercourse, one with another, as exists in this life. He indicated that there will be "a reunion with departed friends" in the next world. He made no reference to family reunions, however, and in one place seemed to be suggesting that there will be no distinction between the sexes. There will, of course, be no marriage or giving in marriage in that future state.

What will be the occupation of man during the eternity to come?

One activity will be the mingling with other spirits.

From divine revelation we are assured, that in the future state of happiness the righteous shall not only join the company of the spirits of just men made perfect, but shall also be admitted into the general assembly of angels. With these pure and superior intelligences, and doubtless, too, with the inhabitants of other worlds, shall the redeemed inhabitants of our globe hold delightful intercourse, and join in their sublime conversation on the most exalted subject. One of the employments in which they will be incessantly engaged will be to contemplate the divine works and administration, and to investigate the wonders of creating power, wisdom, and goodness, as

37 Dick, "Introduction," in Burritt, XX.
38 Dick, Covetousness, 110.
40 Ibid., 250. 41 Ibid., 250. Contrast Joseph Smith in D&C 132.
displayed throughout the universe. For such are the represen-
tations given in Scripture of the exercises of the heavenly
world.\textsuperscript{42}

Man, then, will spend eternity investigating God's creations, and dis-
cussing their sublime wonders with other resurrected beings.

The universe, as has been mentioned, is infinitely large, without
boundary. As there is no end to space, so there is no end to God's
creations. Can they then be found out, even with eternity to search?

It is highly probable that, at this moment, there is not a
single subordinate intelligence, even of the highest order of
created beings, who is acquainted with every region of universal
nature and the objects it contains, and that the greater part
of the vast universe, with its scenery, movements, and inhabi-
tants, is known only by Him who formed it by his power and fills
it with his presence.\textsuperscript{43}

Dick wrote that throughout eternity man will "contemplate new scenes of
glory and felicity \textsuperscript{44} continually bursting on the view." Even with his increased powers of vision man will not be able to ob-
serve a great deal of the universe. It will be necessary, Dick wrote,
after "remaining thousands of millions of years" in one portion of the
universe to be "invested with wings of a seraph" and transported to
another part of the universe. Here man will be able to observe "new
creations, displaying new objects of glory and magnificence, ... starting into existence."\textsuperscript{45} Thus it will be throughout eternity: moving
from one part to another of God's universe, watching His creative powers
in action. But, notwithstanding his increased powers of vision, and his
ability to travel about, man will never be able to view all the scenes

\textsuperscript{42}Dick, \textit{Diffusion of Knowledge}, 218.


\textsuperscript{44}Dick, \textit{Diffusion of Knowledge}, 199.

\textsuperscript{45}Dick, \textit{Philosophy of Religion}, 158-159.
of the universe.

However capacious, therefore, the intellects of good men, in a future world, may be, they will never be able fully to explore the extent and variety, 'the riches and glory' of Him 'who dwells in light unapproachable;' yea, the most exalted of created intelligences wherever existing, although their mental powers and activities were incomparably superior to those of man, will be inadequate to a full investigation and comprehension of the grandeur and sublimities of that kingdom which extends throughout the regions of immensity. 46

Man may, however, through conversation with other intellectual beings, learn of other areas of God's creations.

It is...not only probable, but absolutely certain, that a great portion, perhaps the greatest portion of our knowledge in that state, will be derived from the communications of other intelligences. With intellectual beings of a higher order we shall hold the most intimate converse; for we are informed, that 'just men made perfect' will join 'the innumerable company of angels.' These beings are endued with capacious powers of intellect, and have long been exercising them on the most exalted objects... We have every reason to believe that they have acquired expansive views of the dispensations of the Almighty not only in relation to man, but in relation to numerous worlds and intelligences in different provinces of the empire of God. And, therefore, they must be admirably qualified to impart ample stores of information on the sublimest subjects, to the redeemed inhabitants of our world. 47

As indicated by an earlier quotation only God will ever be completely familiar with all His creations. Man will never comprehend fully God's creations, either through hear-say, or through direct observation.

**Doctrine of Endless Progression**

The doctrine of an endless progression by the souls of men is perhaps one of the most outstanding ideas propounded by Thomas Dick, and certainly sets him apart from the ordinary theologian of his day. It has already been indicated that if a person gains more knowledge in this life than another, he will have so much the advantage in the life

The progression he makes will be so much the more rapid.

Essentially, the progress one makes in the future state is a moral and an intellectual progress.

The soul of man appears to be capable of making a perpetual progress towards intellectual and moral perfection, and of enjoying felicity in every stage of its career, without the possibility of ever arriving at a boundary to its excursions.

The above quotation is an introductory statement, by Dick, to a section entitled "On the perpetual progress of the mind towards perfection."

The majority of the section is a quotation from another writer, identified only as "a celebrated Essayist." Due to its interesting content part of that quotation is here given.

'There is not in my opinion, a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion than this, of the perpetual progress which the soul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength; to consider that she is to shine for ever with new accession of glory, and brighten to all eternity, that she will be still adding virtue to virtue and knowledge to knowledge, carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect pleasing to God himself to see his creation forever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him by greater degrees of resemblance. Methinks this single consideration of the progress of a finite spirit to perfection will be sufficient to extinguish all envy in inferior natures, and all contempt in superior. That cherubim, which now appears as a god to a human soul, knows very well that the period will come about in eternity, when the human soul shall be as perfect as he himself now is; nay, when she shall look down upon that degree of perfection as much as she now falls short of it. It is true the higher nature still advances, and by that means preserves his distance and superiority in the scales of being; but he knows how high soever the station is, of which he stands possessed at present, the inferior nature will at length mount up to it, and shine forth in the same degree of glory. With what astonishment and veneration may we look into our own souls, where there are such hidden stores of virtue and knowledge, such inexhausted sources of perfection? We know not yet what we shall be, nor will it ever enter into the heart of man to conceive the glory that will be always in reserve for him. The soul considered with its Creator, is like one of those mathematical lines

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48See 67-68. 49Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 52.
that may draw nearer to another for all eternity without a possibility of touching it; and can there be a thought so transporting, as to consider ourselves in these perpetual approaches to him who is not only the standard of perfection but of happiness?"\(^{50}\)

Dick made no personal comment on the above; with its conclusion the section in which it appears likewise concludes. Whether he accepted every idea contained in this quotation is not known, although, by its very presence in his book, one may argue that he did agree. Dick nowhere stated, however, that man, through out eternity, will make increased progress towards the perfection of God, such as in the 'geometric scale' idea suggested in the quotation. In fact, in several places Dick indicated that man will never be able to comprehend or observe all God's creations, throughout all eternity. Even God Himself will never be seen or known directly by any of His creatures. In a passage referred to earlier Dick wrote:

> In that future world, we have every reason to believe our knowledge of the attributes of God will be enlarged, and our views of the range of his operations in creation and providence extended far beyond the limits to which they are now confined. But the Divine Being Himself, from the immateriality and immensity of his nature, will remain forever invisible to all finite intelligences; and hence he is described by the Apostle as 'the King Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible, whom no man hath seen or can see.'\(^ {51}\) (First italics added.)

Although Dick used the term "finite," it is evident that he is referring to man in the future state.\(^ {52}\) He stated that immortal man will never be able to see his Maker and Sustainer.

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\(^{50}\)Ibid., 54-55. The quotation is taken from The Spectator, Volume 2. No other information is given. Compare this concept with that of Joseph Smith, to be discussed below, pages 87-90.

\(^{51}\)Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 260-261.

\(^{52}\)The earlier quotation from the "Essayist" also makes use of the term 'finite' in reference to the immortal spirit. See page 74 herein.
It appears that man, though immortal, will nevertheless be a finite being for all eternity. He will never achieve the status of a self-existent intelligence. Man's progressive nature relates to his ability to become morally perfect, and intellectually perfect. What this latter ability implies is not clear. Certainly man will never achieve God's degree of perfection of knowledge. Nor will he ever possess a perfect knowledge of God's universe, or of God Himself. "Could we thoroughly comprehend the depths of his perfections, or the grandeur of his empire, he would cease to be God, or we would cease to be limited and dependent beings."\textsuperscript{53} Dick did not state whether man will ever understand God's creative powers, though it would appear that man will never possess this knowledge, either. In short, the nature of the perfect state to which man is heading is never fully described. It is a better condition than the present world, no doubt, and certainly a higher status for man's immortal spirit than that taught by most of Dick's contemporaries, but definitely not the type of perfection Joseph Smith envisaged for man.

\textsuperscript{53} Dick, Celestial Scenery, 215.
The major aspects of Thomas Dick's theology have now been investigated, with references to general similarities or disagreements between his and that of Joseph Smith. What remains is to study the theological relationship of Thomas Dick and Joseph Smith with special reference to the assertions made by Mrs. Fawn Brodie. As indicated in the Introduction Fawn M. Brodie made several assertions regarding the theological dependence of Joseph Smith upon Thomas Dick. Those assertions are as follows:

1) "Joseph Smith had recently been reading Thomas Dick's Philosophy of a Future State." Her only evidence for this assertion is the fact that "Sidney Rigdon quoted openly from Dick." As noted earlier this is incorrect.

2) "Dick's whole work made a lasting impression on Joseph."

3) "Dick's elucidation of the thesis that matter is eternal and indestructible Joseph found convincing."

4) Joseph Smith's concept that the earth was "organized out of already existing matter rather than created out of nothing" came from Dick.

5) The concept that Kolob was the grant center of the universe, and the Throne of God came from Thomas Dick. Smith did not acquire the term "Kolob," but the concept, from Dick.

6) The concept that man's immortal soul will progress eternally towards perfection came from Dick.

7) The Book of Abraham was the "germ of Joseph's metaphysical system," the ideas of which came from Dick.

8) "Compare the Book of Abraham with Dick's Philosophy of a Future State."  

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1Brodie, 171-172.
It is apparent, at first glance, that the fully developed theology of the Prophet Joseph Smith and that of Thomas Dick are dissimilar enough that several of the assertions by Brodie can already be rejected without further discussion. For instance, it has been determined that Dick did not believe matter to be "eternal and indestructible." It has been further determined that the concept regarding man's future state which Dick held was quite different from that held by Joseph Smith. The same is true regarding their concepts of God and the Throne of God as the center of the universe: they are radically different. From this it would appear, at first glance, that there is little validity in the assertions made by Mrs. Brodie.

It is quite unlikely that Joseph Smith read all of Dick's works (two of them were written after Smith's death); indeed it is not evident that he ever read anything by Dick, other than perhaps what was published in the *Messenger and Advocate*. It is precisely this point that gives Mrs. Brodie her greatest strength, though she was not aware of it. To rephrase this in question form: What would have been Joseph Smith's interpretation of Thomas Dick's theology if he had read the two books quoted from Dick in the *Messenger and Advocate*? What would Dick's influence on the subsequent theology of Joseph Smith have been if he had read his writings? The present chapter will seek to answer these questions.

In seeking the answers an important point must be kept in mind. That is, while it is not likely that the Prophet would have been influenced by what Dick did not state explicitly (either positively or negatively), Joseph Smith could have been influenced by that which Dick openly rejected. In other words, if that which Dick rejected later shows up in Joseph's works it is possible that the germ for that concept (or the completed
fixed concept) may have come from Smith's having read it in Dick's books. This is not as likely to be the case, perhaps as when, for instance, Dick and Smith both taught the same doctrine. In the latter case it would be more easily ascertained that there had been an influence of one writer upon the other. The solutions to these problems, and the questions asked, will be sought for in only the two books, with supplementary material, if needed, in the footnotes. The two books were each published at least twice in the United States by 1830, by the E.G. Merriam Company of Brookfield, Massachusetts. These two books were The Philosophy of Religion, and the Philosophy of a Future State. A third book, The Christian Philosopher, was also published by the same company in 1830. Though this latter was not quoted in the Messenger and Advocate, it will be the basis for most of the supplementary material.

The Eternal Nature of Matter

As the first two assertions made by Mrs. Brodie cannot be investigated upon present information, they will be withheld until after the other points have been investigated. The first topic for consideration then, will be the one dealing with Dick's influence upon Joseph Smith's concept of the eternal nature of matter.

It has already been determined that Thomas Dick did not believe that matter (or mind) was eternal and indestructible—quite the contrary. He believed that God had all the power He desired, including the power to annihilate into nothing that which He had originally created from nothing. The questions that need to be asked now, are: Would Joseph Smith have gained this impression from the two works known to have been available to him? Or, would Joseph Smith have been led to his own conclusions by anything Thomas Dick might have rejected?
It is possible that the Prophet may have arrived at the conclusion that matter is eternal by reading Dick's works. If he did, however, it was not because Dick believed that it was so. As indicated above, Dick believed that God's omnipotent power was such as to allow Him to "accomplish whatever he pleases." In both of the two books concerned Dick wrote that God created matter out of nothing.

"The Eternal Mind... called [the stars] from nothing into existence." While ages numerous as the sands are rolling on, while mighty worlds are emerging out of nothing. He even stated that the word create means "brought or to bring out of nothing." God's power also allowed Him to "form the element of light." It appears evident that Dick did indeed believe that matter had been created out of nothing. It was not eternal, then, in the sense of being without beginning, at least. Joseph Smith did not accept this attribute of God, at least the power to create something from nothing.

Now, I ask all who hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation, say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing? The reason is, that they are unlearned in the things of God, and have not the gift of the Holy Ghost.

He wrote further

Element is eternal.

Element [chaotic matter] had an existence from the time [God] had.

The intelligences of spirits had no beginning.

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2Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 76.

3Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 214.

4Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 98.

5Ibid., 260.

6Ibid., 43.

7Smith, 350.

8Smith, 350.

9Smith, 350.

10Ibid., 353.
Man was...in the beginning with God.11

These passages, all written late in his life, indicate that for Joseph Smith, there was never a time when God existed alone in the Universe. Matter had no beginning, nor did the intelligent principle which is the basic component of man.

When Dick wrote that God is a self-existent Being who once existed alone, he meant that a time existed when there was nothing in the universe but God Himself. Man, mind and matter all derived their existence from the hand of the omnipotent Creator. Joseph Smith agreed that God was self-existent, but he also believed that man was self-existent that "man...exists upon the same principles" as God does.12 Man had no beginning. Indeed, taught Joseph Smith, if the spirit of man had a beginning, then it must have an end. "If that doctrine is true, then the doctrine of annihilation would be true."13 It has been determined that Thomas Dick believed matter and all else had a beginning. If the Prophet was correct, then Dick must also have believed in the doctrine of annihilation.

The doctrine of annihilation implies that matter, or mind, can be destroyed into a state of oblivion; into a non-existent state. As observed earlier, Dick did indeed believe God had the power to annihilate, not only matter, but mind itself, for whose sake matter exists. Dick wrote that "there is no example of annihilation, or an entire destruction of material substances, to be found in the universe."14 This, of course, is to be expected. There can be no remaining evidence of annihilation. Therefore, any knowledge regarding such an event must come

from God. Because it has not, Dick is left to speculate as to whether God can, or will, annihilate any particle of matter. He therefore concluded, that "it is in the least degree improbable, that any one particle of matter which now exists will ever be completely destroyed."^15 Does this imply that God cannot annihilate the soul of man, or the material universe? When discussing man's potential for a future life Dick writes as follows:

Since the soul is an uncompounded substance, it cannot perish by a decomposition of its parts; and consequently, may exist, in a separate state, in the full exercise of its powers, after its corporeal tenement is dissolved. But its immortality cannot necessarily be inferred from its natural capacity of existing in a state of separation from the body; for that Being who created it may, if he pleases reduce it to annihilation, since all the works of God, whether material or immaterial (i.e., mind/ depend wholly on that power by which they were originally brought into existence. Its immortality depends solely upon the will of its Creator, without whose sustaining energy the whole creation would sink into its original nothing.16

Elsewhere Dick wrote that "we have reason to wonder that... the Almighty does not... shatter this globe to atoms, and bury its inhabitants in the gulf of everlasting oblivion."17 It appears evident that God did indeed have the power to annihilate both man and the entirety of creation. Why then did He not do so? Dick wrote that impotence is not the reason. If it were man's admiration for God would cease. The reason He does not annihilate man is due to His mercy and longsuffering.18 It is of further interest that in one of the passages quoted in the Messenger and Advocate Dick sought to show the absurdity of supposing that God will ever annihilate the thinking principle in man. Several

^15 Ibid., Cf. 103, 157.

^16 Ibid., 120-121. Cf. page 295 where Dick implies that the wicked may not have any existence after the judgement.

^17 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 66. ^18 Ibid., 69. Cf. 239.
times Dick refers to this thinking principle as being immaterial. No where does he state that the soul has an inherent right to immortality, only that it is absurd to suppose that it will not live on. Rather Dick seemed to state that God has the power, but not the desire, to annihilate man.\textsuperscript{19} In the second part of the second quotation from Dick he wrote that the wicked "can look forward to no brighter displays of the grandeur of the material and intellectual universe, but to an eternal deprivation of his powers of intelligence in the shades of annihilation."\textsuperscript{20}

It would appear from these statements that, for Thomas Dick, God created out of nothing, and could annihilate into nothing as He desired. That He does not is due to His love for His creations, rather than their inherent right to immortality. It is evident therefore that Mrs. Brodie is incorrect when she refers to "Dick's elucidation of the thesis that matter is eternal and indestructible."\textsuperscript{21} It is also evident that she is incorrect when she states that "Joseph found convincing that elucidation."\textsuperscript{22} If Thomas Dick did not elucidate on it, it is impossible that Joseph Smith would find it convincing.

Thomas Dick did feel certain, however, that God would not destroy man. Therefore, he referred often to the fact that man was immortal, and wrote an entire book on the "future state" of mankind. It is possible, then, that Joseph Smith may have been influenced by this nature of Dick's writings, but certainly not by what Dick himself believed regarding God's omnipotence.

\textsuperscript{19}Dick, quoted in \textit{Messenger and Advocate}, III (December 1836), 425.

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}, (February, 1837), 463. \textsuperscript{21}Brodie, 171 \textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}
When Dick wrote about the creation of the earth, he implied that it was organized out of previously existing matter. It must be emphasized, however, that this matter had nevertheless been created out of nothing. Joseph Smith agreed with the first part of this belief, but thoroughly rejected the latter.

You ask the learned doctors why they say the world was made out of nothing; and they will answer, 'Doesn't the Bible say He created the world?' And they infer, from the word create, that it must have been made out of nothing. Now the word create came from the word haurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter, which is element... Element had an existence from the time God had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning, and can have no end... Now I ask all who hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation, say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing? The reason is, that they are unlearned in the things of God, and have not the gift of the Holy Ghost.

In conclusion, the relationship between Thomas Dick and Joseph Smith on this aspect of their theology is not a close one. The Prophet showed himself to be a most original thinker, and not bound to the traditions of the past, as was Dick. If Joseph Smith had read the works of Thomas Dick he apparently was not too much impressed by them, for he rejected Dick's beliefs regarding the creation and the nature of matter. If Joseph Smith "had recently been reading" Thomas Dick's writings, and his own theology "was influenced" by Dick's, then the influence must be accounted for by what Dick assumes, and what he rejects. For Joseph Smith God had nothing to say about man's eternality. Man was

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23 Dick, Philosophy of Religion, 260.

24 Smith, 350-352. Compare this to Dick's statement in Christian Philosopher, 189-190. It is quoted on page 46 of this thesis.
as eternal and self-existent as was God. The Prophet had no need to put forth arguments proving "the absurdity of supposing..." There was no supposition. It is, of course, possible that Joseph Smith's move towards a concept of the self-existence of man was given impetus by Dick. Thomas Dick, however, was no different in this regard than were many of his fellow Protestants. It would not have been necessary for Joseph Smith to have read Thomas Dick in order to have gained the idea of man's future immortality. He could have learned it from his Protestant parents and friends, or from the Protestant converts to his religion. Nevertheless, the possibility, though remote, exists: Joseph Smith may have been influenced by reading Thomas Dick. If so, he carried the concept much further than Dick would have dared to have done.

The Throne of God

Though she does not state it explicitly, Mrs. Brodie infers that the concept of Kolob being near the throne of God (as taught in the Book of Abraham) came from Thomas Dick. Having referred to this relationship between Kolob and the Throne of God in the body of the text, she then states in a footnote: "Compare the Book of Abraham with Dick: The Philosophy of a Future State."²⁵

As has already been observed, the concepts of God held by those two theologians are quite in contrast to each other. For Joseph Smith, God was "an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens."²⁶ For Thomas Dick, God was an uncompounded spiritual substance who "sits upon the throne of universal nature."²⁷ It is true that Dick does in one

²⁵Brodie, 172. ²⁶Smith, 345.
²⁷Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 204.
place state that there may be a grand center about which the planetary systems revolve. But God Himself fills the immensity of space, and cannot therefore be located in any single spot; certainly not upon a throne in the sense the Prophet uses the term (and if the definitions agree, similarities are impossible. The terms may be the same, but if they stand for different things, there can be no equating of one to the other). For the latter the throne of God was a glorified or celestialized earth, upon which God, an "exalted man," dwelt. For Dick the throne constituted no planetary body, though there may be a geographical location at which spot Jesus and the holy angels reside. God Himself is everywhere, yet nowhere. God, as a physical, tangible being, does not exist. As a spiritual Essence, pervading the universe He does exist. Hence, to say that the planets revolve around the throne of God is meaningless, unless it is understood that God "sits upon the throne of universal nature." In this sense God takes on a character not unlike Joseph Smith's concept of the Light of Christ (with distinctions, of course.)

It would appear that on this point Mrs. Brodie is again mistaken. It is true that Joseph's thinking may have been aided by some of the concepts he may have read in Dick's writings. But it appears to be a small probability that he was influenced by what Dick taught. If the Prophet "had recently been reading" Dick's works it would appear that he rejected most of that which Dick believed most strongly, while retaining that which Dick seemed to reject. There are several references in the Old Testament to the throne of God. These are referred to, and

28 See below, pages 91-93.
quoted by Dick. Joseph Smith could likewise have gained knowledge from the Old Testament, not to mention the Book of Mormon. Again, the possibility for influence is present, though small.

Eternal Progression

Thomas Dick, as indicated, believed that the righteous of this and all other earths were in the midst of an eternal progression towards a state of moral and intellectual perfection. Mrs. Brodie claims that this concept "developed peculiar ramifications in Joseph's later teachings." For Dick moral perfection was conceived of as a state in which no propensity towards evil was to be found. Intellectual perfection referred to a condition when something less than a perfect knowledge of God's creation had been attained.

Man's eternal progression, naturally, is based on the immortality of the soul. For Dick this prospect was not always completely visible. "The soul's immortality cannot necessarily be inferred from its natural capacity of existing in a state of separation from the body; for that Being who created it may, if he pleases, reduce it to annihilation." Dick assumed, however, that God's benevolence will cause Him to bring immortality to all men. Immortality does not consist in being able to perceive God directly, however. Indeed, "seeing God as he is" consists in "beholding the Divine glory as displayed in the physical and moral economy of the universe." At no stage in his immortal existence

29See I Kings 22:19; Revelations 7:15; Moroni 9:26, etc.
30Brodie, 172. 31Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 120-121.
33Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 259.
will man see God, or fully comprehend His works.

To the view of every finite mind, the universe must always appear boundless and incomprehensible. Were it possible that we could ever arrive at the outskirts of creation, after having surveyed all that exists in the material universe, we might be said, in some measure, to comprehend the Creator himself; having perceived the utmost limits to which his power and intelligence have been extended... And we may hence conclude that the highest order of created intellects, after spending myriads of ages in their research, will never come to a period in their investigations of the works and the ways of God. 34

Joseph Smith rejected this concept. For the Prophet, if a man was to know God (and eternal life is based on that knowledge) then men must "learn how to be Gods" themselves.35 "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."36 To know God meant that man must be exalted to the same degree of glory as that possessed by God Himself.37 To receive God's glory was to receive all the power and authority which Jesus Christ possessed in His exalted state. In the Seventh Lecture on Faith, the Prophet expounded at length on this subject.

When men begin to live by faith they begin to draw near to God; and when faith is perfected they are like him; and because he is saved they are saved also; for they will be in the same situation he is in, because they have come to him; and when he appears they shall be like him, for they will see him as he is. ... We think that it will not be a matter of dispute, that two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved; for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the salvation of every creature which will be saved; and if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be, or else not be saved. We ask, then, where is the prototype? or where is the saved being? We conclude... that it is Christ... If we should continue our interrogation, and ask how it is that he is saved? the answer would be—because he is a just and holy being; and if he were anything different from what he is, he would not be saved... When he (the Lord) shall appear, the saints will

34 Ibid., 247.
35Smith, 346.
36 Ibid., 345-346.
37 Ibid., 347.
be like him; and if they are not holy, as he is holy, and perfect as he is perfect, they cannot be like him; for no being can enjoy his glory without possessing his perfections and holiness, no more than they could reign in his kingdom without his power. All these Gospel quotations put together give as clear an account of the state of the glorified saints as language could give—works that Jesus had done they were to do, and greater works than those which he had done among them should they do... It is very plain that the greater works which those that believed on his name were to do were to be done in eternity... Unless they have the glory which the Father had given him they could not be one with them... The glory which the Father and the Son have is because they are just and holy beings... If the Savior gives this glory to any others... he would give them the glory which the Father has given him... These teachings of the Savior most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation, and what he proposed unto the human family when he proposed to save them—that he proposed to make them like unto himself, and he was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings.38

This lengthy passage indicates that salvation consists in nothing less than becoming as God; that is, in being joint-heirs with Jesus Christ in receiving all that God hath. This includes His power and dominion.

"Every man who reigns in celestial glory is a God to his dominions."39

To possess the power of God means to possess the power of creating or organizing worlds and peopling them with one's own spiritual offspring.40

This power of man in a perfected state to create worlds was thoroughly rejected by Thomas Dick. After having quoted from another writer regarding the qualities of a heavenly being (i.e., man in his immortal state), Dick appended the following footnote:

The writer a Swiss naturalist/, in addition to these quoted remarks, states the following properties of the highest order


39Smith, 374.

40See Doctrine and Covenants 132:19-21, 23, 29-32, 37. Thomas Dick apparently rejected the concept that husband and wife would be reunited. See Philosophy of Religion, 250.
of intelligences—: 'To be invested with a power capable of displacing the heavenly bodies, or changing the course of nature; and to be possessed of a power and skill capable of organizing matter, of forming a plant, an animal, a world. --But I can scarcely think that such perfections are competent to any being but the Supreme.'

It is quite apparent that here again these two thinkers disagreed as to what constituted the perfection of man's immortal soul. Joseph Smith taught that man would not only see God, but also become as God, and do the things which God did. For Thomas Dick, perfection meant to learn more about God's creation by spending eternity observing those creations. Man will never be able to fully comprehend the works of God, nor will he ever see God. Nor will man ever possess the powers or attributes of God.

As with the other assertions of Mrs. Brodie, she is mistaken in this one. Thomas Dick and Joseph Smith were 'miles apart' in their concepts regarding perfection. Mrs. Brodie must have been aware of this difference (if, indeed, she read Thomas Dick) for later in her book she writes that the doctrine of eternal progression "was the most challenging concept that Joseph Smith ever produced, and in a sense the most original." However, it is, again, possible that the Prophet may have gained some information for his future theology by accepting that which Dick rejected.

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41 Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 220, footnote.
43 Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 247.
45 Dick, Philosophy of a Future State, 220. 46 Brodie, 300.
Metaphysics

This section could perhaps be left out of this thesis, were it not for several further assertions made by Fawn Brodie. She claimed that Joseph Smith "was groping for a new metaphysics," the "germ" of which was the Book of Abraham.\(^{47}\) As has been indicated in all of the foregoing sections of this chapter, the writing of Thomas Dick was supposed to have played an important role in the development of that book. This section will compare briefly the metaphysics presented by the two men.

For Thomas Dick the basic principle in the universe was mind. God is Mind, that is, a spiritual and immaterial essence. This is the same substance which comprises the soul of man. But God also created a second, and most necessary element: matter. Hence, Dick was a dualist: the universe consists of two basic substances: matter, and immaterial mind. Joseph Smith taught that "there is no such thing as immaterial matter." Apparently all that exists in the universe is matter, in more or less refined conditions. In a more refined state it constitutes the spirit of man, or any other spiritual body.\(^{48}\) In its most refined state matter exists as intelligence, which is the basic substance of all life. "Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it."\(^{49}\) From this it would appear that the Prophet taught a monistic metaphysics. There is one basic principle in the universe, which can be refined to the point where it can be referred to as being possessed of the qualities of "light and truth."\(^{50}\)

\(^{47}\)Ibid., 172. \(^{48}\) Doctrine and Covenants 131:7-8.

\(^{49}\)Smith, 354. Cf. Doctrine and Covenants 93.

\(^{50}\) Doctrine and Covenants 93:36. Cf. 93: 29.
Elsewhere Joseph Smith identified this principle of intelligence (or light of truth) with the Light or Spirit of Christ. This Light of Christ is said to "proceed forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space." It "is in all things and giveth life to all things." In this regard it resembles Dick's concept of God—i.e., all pervasive Mind, though the former is material, the latter is immaterial. The Light of Christ is said to be the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars. In the foregoing aspects section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants is not unlike the concepts presented in the Book of Abraham. In the explanation given accompanying Facsimile number 2 it is stated that the sun receives its light from Kolob (the governing body near the throne of God) through a "governing power." Apparently this "governing power" is to be equated with the "Light of Christ." Hence this concept, taught in 1842, was identical to that published first in 1835 in the Book of Commandments. This latter date (1835) was more than a year prior to the first reference to Dick's writings in the Messenger and Advocate. References to the Spirit of Christ, or the Light of Christ, begin with the publication of the Book of Mormon, and continue to appear until the more definitive statements in Doctrine and Covenants 84 and 88, as just quoted. That the evolution of these early concepts may have been aided by having read Thomas Dick is possible. But to state that Dick is the source of Joseph Smith's metaphysics is not accurate. Much of the Prophet's metaphysics is based on the Book of Mormon and his interpretation of the Gospel of John, a book to which Dick makes little reference.

51 Compare Doctrine and Covenants 84:45 with 88:6-7.
The connection Mrs. Brodie apparently seeks to make is relative to the throne of God being the center of the universe. This has already been discussed from the point of view of a geographical center, at which spot God resides. For Joseph Smith there can be no center of the universe. In addition to the concept of limitless space (held in common with Dick), the Prophet taught a doctrine of a plurality of Gods, all of whom held dominion over a portion of that space. This forbids the idea that there is a center of the universe, or a number one God presiding over the others. Dick taught a limitless space, with no geographical center, but was restricted to a monotheistic concept of God, which pervades the universe. Obviously, a concept of a plurality of Gods would be found repulsive by Dick; indeed, it would be an impossible concept under his definition of God. And the Prophet was most aware of this difference. As has already been demonstrated, many of the doctrines held by Thomas Dick were among those explicitly renounced and rejected by Joseph Smith. It is also the case with this concept.

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56Smith, 346, 348, 349, 370-374.
CONCLUSION

Having compared the theology of Joseph Smith with that of Thomas Dick, and reviewed the specific assertions made by Mrs. Brodie, it is time to investigate her two general claims. These claims are that Joseph "had recently been reading Thomas Dick's *Philosophy of a Future State,*" and that "Dick's whole work made a lasting impression on Joseph."¹

It is, of course, impossible to determine whether the Prophet ever read the writings of Thomas Dick, other than those quoted in the Messenger and Advocate. Joseph never mentioned Dick by name, nor did he ever indicate that he had recently been reading his writings. He did, however, reject many concepts held by Thomas Dick, which might be taken to demonstrate that he had read those concepts in Dick's writings. That he would have been familiar with the concepts held by his Protestant brethren seems only natural, however. He was reared in a Protestant environment, did missionary work among them, and certainly must have discussed with recent converts their former beliefs. From any one of these sources he could have gained knowledge of Protestant theology. The majority, if not all, of the traditional Christian doctrines which he openly rejected were common doctrines, not concepts advocated for the first time by Dick. Hence, the Prophet did not need to have read the works of Thomas Dick in order to gain this knowledge of Protestant beliefs, which he subsequently rejected.

¹Brodie, 171.
None of the above is proof, however, that Joseph Smith did not read Thomas Dick’s books. He may have read them. Throughout his life the Prophet was in search of truth. He taught that it was "one of the grand fundamental truths of Mormonism... to receive truth, let it come from whence it may." If Thomas Dick taught the truth then Joseph Smith was bound to accept it, if he was made aware of its existence. There are a few similarities in doctrine between the two men. As noted in the chapters on Dick’s theology, however, it is not the major doctrines of the two men that are similar (if any religious doctrine can be considered less important than another). One thing is certain, however: there is insufficient similarity in the two theologies to justify the assertions Mrs. Brodie makes. She either misrepresents Dick’s beliefs or fails to demonstrate the similarities, or show evidence that Smith was influenced by Dick’s writings. To state that Dick believed in the eternal nature of matter is incorrect. To equate Dick’s concept of the nature of matter with that of Joseph Smith borders on fanciful imagination. Indeed, the Prophet rejected totally the concept that matter was created \textit{ex nihilo}, as Dick taught. To suggest that because both men believed in the eternal progression of intelligent spirits Joseph Smith must necessarily have been influenced by Thomas Dick, is a false assumption. When the two concepts are compared they are found to be radically different at vital points. Here, Thomas Dick rejected that which the Prophet taught to be most necessary in the future life of the soul; i.e., the end product. When their attitudes regarding the attributes of God and His throne are compared they are likewise found to be totally different. Likewise with their metaphysics there is no similarity.

\textsuperscript{2}Smith, 313.
On all these points Mrs. Brodie seeks to demonstrate the Prophet's reliance upon Dick's writings. If Joseph did read Dick's books he seems not to have been too impressed by Dick's personal theology. He thoroughly rejected most of the concepts held by Dick. Perhaps this is the only evidence that Mrs. Brodie should have used to prove that Joseph had read Thomas Dick's writings: that he rejected so much that Dick taught might indicate that he had read the books. But to state that the Prophet was influenced, to the extent of imitating Dick's ideas cannot be substantiated. There is no justification for Mrs. Brodie's assertions, as this thesis has demonstrated.

Ken Godfrey has written that:

a thorough check of Mrs. Brodie's footnotes will usually disclose that for the most part, they are accurate; but the meaning she derives from and places on such evidence can be seriously questioned. Thus, a good teacher should read for himself the documents Mrs. Brodie has used before making up his mind about any given event or its interpretation.

As was shown in the Introduction Mrs. Brodie's reference to the Messenger and Advocate is not accurate. The fact that she cited the wrong pages, the wrong man quoting Thomas Dick, and failed to notice the second quotation are indicative of the fact that she was not accurate in that particular footnote. It is likewise apparent that she did not read Thomas Dick's book too closely for when referring to Dick's theology, she often misrepresents it (especially when equating it with that of Joseph Smith). The document she used (i.e., Thomas Dick's books) has been read. The conclusion that this thesis warrants is: If Joseph Smith had recently been reading Thomas Dick, Mrs. Fawn Brodie had not. The former rejected theological concepts embraced by Dick; the latter mis-represented Dick's theology.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX I

From Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963), 171-172.

"Instead of saying: 'God created the earth,' he wrote: 'The Gods organized the earth.' This change, which represented a significant step in Joseph's slowly evolving metaphysical system, had its root in his new learning. The idea of the plurality of God he had picked up from his classes in Hebrew, where he had learned that Eloheim, one of the Hebrew words for God, is plural, and had therefore concluded that the Bible had been carelessly translated.¹

Joseph's new concept that the earth had been 'organized' out of already existing matter rather than created out of nothing had a less obvious but no less definite root in his new scholarship. He had recently been reading Thomas Dick's Philosophy of a Future State, a long winded dissertation on astronomy and metaphysics.² Dick's elucidation of the thesis that matter is eternal and indestructible Joseph had found convincing, and he had logically concluded that God must have made the heavens and the earth out of materials He had on hand.

Dick's whole work made a lasting impression on Joseph, whose openmindedness, stemming no doubt from the insubstantial character of his religious credo, was unique among ministers of the gospel. This book was his first introduction to the mathematics of the heavens—the millions of stars, the immeasurable distances—and he had come to grips with the infinitude of the universe in his own consciousness.
The facts of astronomy must somehow be welded to his own special structure of Jewish and Christian mysticism. He was groping for a new metaphysics that would somehow take account of the new world of science. In his own primitive and egocentric fashion he was trying to resolve the most troublesome philosophical problem of the nineteenth century.

His solution was the *Book of Abraham*. Like the philosophical novelist who creates a character greater than himself to voice the distillate of his own speculations, Joseph created Abraham an eminent astronomer who penetrates all the mysteries of the universe. Abraham relates that there is one star, Kolob, lying near the throne of God, which is greater than all the rest. One revolution of Kolob takes a thousand years, and from this revolution God Himself reckons time. Kolob and countless other stars are peopled by spirits that are eternal as matter itself. These spirits are not cast in the same mold, but differ among themselves in quality of intelligence as the stars differ in magnitude.

These concepts, which developed peculiar ramifications in Joseph's later teachings, came directly from Dick, who had speculated that the stars were peopled by 'various orders of intelligences,' and that those intelligences were 'progressive beings' in various stages of evolution toward perfection.3

The *Book of Abraham* expressed... the germ of Joseph's metaphysical system.1

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3Compare the Book of Abraham with Dick: Philosophy of a Future State (Brookfield, Massachusetts, 2nd Ed., 1830), pp. 101, 230, 241, 249. Dick held that in all probability "the systems of the universe revolved around a common centre... the throne of God."

(The above footnotes appear in the original.)
ABSTRACT

In her attempt to find a strictly human origin for certain doctrines contained in the Book of Abraham, and the later teachings of Joseph Smith, Mrs. Fawn M. Brodie relies upon the writings of one Thomas Dick. Dick was a nineteenth century Scottish scientist-theologian who wrote several volumes on religious and scientific subjects. It is known that at least two volumes were known to at least some of the early Latter-day Saints, for passages from them were quoted in the Messenger and Advocate. The purpose of this thesis has been to research the entire ten volumes of Dick's writings in order to determine the entirety of his theology. The paper first relates the life and general philosophy of Thomas Dick, and then investigates specifics of his theology under the general chapter headings of "God," "Man," and "Salvation." The final two chapters of the thesis deal with those specific aspects of Joseph Smith's theology which Mrs. Brodie claims were influenced by Dick's writings. The conclusion reached as a result of this study is: while it cannot be demonstrated that any of the Prophet's theology has any direct foundation in Thomas Dick's, there may have been impetus gained from Dick's writings in the direction Joseph Smith's theology took, but only if it could be demonstrated that Joseph Smith had read them, and this has not been done, by Mrs. Brodie, nor anyone else.