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An Explication of Some Philosophical Aspects of the Thought of Orson Pratt

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AN EXPLICATION OF SOME PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS
OF THE THOUGHT OF ORSON PRATT

A Thesis
submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
Department of History and Philosophy of Religion
of Brigham Young University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science

by
Joseph W. Tingey
September, 1958
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Justification.—No formalized philosophical system has officially represented the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to this time. Some claim there is need for one while others believe that none is forthcoming or necessary. Let the question be argued elsewhere. It is to be observed that metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and science are all essentially represented in Mormonism and should at least be recognized in comparison with their kind.

The useful practices of various epistemologies were employed for verification purposes although authoritarianism dominated the acquisition of knowledge in the infant Church. This need not indicate that the submitting authority was held in doubt. Various methods were found helpful in converting to personal knowledge that which had been given publicly. Thus, rationalism, mysticism, empiricism, pragmatism—any and all possible contributors—were utilized in the learning process. Some of the keenest minds in the Church were turned to the consideration of the philosophical implications of revealed doctrine. Outstanding among those minds was that of Orson Pratt. Pratt's ecclesiastical significance was largely that of a missionary. He was sent throughout the United States and
into foreign lands to preach the Gospel of the Restored Church. The astuteness of his mind, demonstrated in his writings, attracted the attention of metaphysicians and theologians of considerable achievement. They did not hesitate to challenge his concepts in areas of their interest. Pratt was forced to either silently submit and lose by default, or answer in defense of the concepts he upheld. He chose to answer. This author believes that his answers were both logical and powerful to the point of embarrassment to his opponents.

Pratt also engaged somewhat in the work of metaphysical theory creation—perhaps as a result of stimulation received from philosophical challengers. He troubled peaceful waters by opposing the Christian scholastics as well as the followers of Newtonian physics' almost deified author, Newton. Pratt's theory was audacious and unique. He dared to be original—at least for his period—in his concept of ultimate reality.

Pratt's theories of materialism and causation have been chosen for consideration in this thesis because they represent his closest approach to areas of purely philosophical significance. It was in the former that he was most vehemently challenged by contemporary theologians. The latter represents the area of his deepest theoretical penetration. There is a vast overlapping area between the two and one should not be considered at length without the other. The combination involves his metaphysical speculation almost in its entirety.
Orson Pratt's philosophical writings—meritorious as they are—have been pathetically neglected in our day. Some of his concepts may be passe, but others are unquestionably vital and relevant—particularly in theological context. His technical jargon may deter some laymen from serious study while others may be offended by his antiquated style in comparison with that of modern writers. The quality of Pratt's thought, however, is undeniably of high caliber and easily justifies any revival of his concepts.

All of Pratt's philosophical concepts enjoy an under-lying relevance to theology. Some of his implications are of poignant significance in the endless polemics extant among Christian sectaries. A marked relationship between his ideas and the accepted doctrine of the Church is exhibited in many of his central ideas in spite of the fact that he was censured at certain junctures by those in authority over him.

The purposes of this thesis, then, are to (1) rejuvenate general interest in Orson Pratt's ideological contributions; (2) assist in clarifying his concepts of materialism and causation; (3) assert the significance of Pratt's metaphysical speculation; (4) demonstrate the relationship between Pratt's concepts and some doctrines of the Church; and (5) regenerate confidence in and respect for the concepts of one of the most adroit intellects the Church has yet contained.

Pratt's main philosophical and theological writings which will be referred to are Absurdities of Immaterialism,
The Great First Cause, and his Kingdom of God tract series. These will be abbreviated, A.I., G.F.C., and K.G., respectively, for purposes of notation. The most frequently used secondary sources, with their notation abbreviations, are the Documentary History of the Church, D.H.C.; Journal of Discourses, J.D.; Book of Mormon, B. of M.; Doctrine and Covenants, D. & C.; Pearl of Great Price, P. of G.P.; Times and Seasons, T.S.; and Millennial Star, M.S.

The author wishes to recognize the work of those who have devoted their time and talents to a consideration of the life of Orson Pratt. N. B. Lundwall's compilations of Pratt's writings and discourses have been key sources of information for this work. T. Edgar Lyon's thesis on Orson Pratt's significance as an early leader of the Latter-day Saint movement is particularly valuable as a historical approach to this most interesting figure. Many others, such as Bayard Mendenhall, have contributed papers, articles, biographies and commentaries—all of which have assisted in keeping alive the memory of his life and contributions. It is hoped that this treatise will not detract from that common endeavor.

Personal History.—When the Reverend Thomas Hooker and his congregation left Newtown—later known as Cambridge, Massachusetts—they relocated and became the first settlers of Hartford, Connecticut. It is said that their group included
John and William Pratt, and that these two brothers received, as did the other colonists of the party, a small portion of land in the first distribution made in that area. William was later given one hundred additional acres for having served as a Lieutenant in the Pequot war. He reared his family on this land and became one of the Judges of the first court in New London County, Connecticut.

Orson Pratt, the son of Jared Pratt and Charity Dickinson, was born in the eighth generation from William Pratt on September 19, 1811. Orson was the fifth of six children. Jared was poor in worldly riches and was forced to work for various wealthy farmers in order to support his family. The family then resided in Hartford, Washington County, New York. Jared and Charity did, however, provide a highly desirable home influence. Orson attested this fact in his autobiography:

While blessed with the privilege of living at home, we were diligently taught in every principle of morality and honesty; for although my parents had no faith in the modern sectarian principles of Christianity, yet they looked upon the history of ancient Christianity, as recorded in the Bible, as something most sacred and worth possessing. These Bible doctrines they diligently instilled into the minds of their children, so far as they understood them; and often expressed themselves as desirous of belonging to the Church of Christ, if it could be found.

His parents moved from Hartford to Lebanon, Columbia County, New York, when Orson was about three years old. He  

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1Documentary History of the Church, Autobiographical sketch of Orson Pratt.

2Ibid.
there went to school for a few months of every year until 1822. He alternately attended schools and worked for various farmers in many parts of the state during the next few years.

Orson's elder brother, Parley Parker Pratt, had joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints--more commonly called the Mormon Church. Parley became a missionary for the Church and, together with a companion, brought the message of the Gospel to Orson in 1830. The Church itself had been organized only a few months. It was directed by the young Prophet, Joseph Smith, Jr. of Palmyra, New York, who claimed to have been visited by God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. These glorified beings instructed him to abandon all existing churches and organize one after the pattern which would be shown him by them.

Orson believed the message brought to him by his brother and on his nineteenth birthday, was baptized a member of the church they represented. This proved to be the most significant act of Orson's life. His allegiance to and faith in the Church became the force which impelled him in all his major work. It was to the establishing of the Kingdom of God that he dedicated himself and few men were able to keep pace with him from the moment of that dedication.

The Prophet called Orson to fill missions in various parts of eastern United States during the next five years. He accepted the calls willingly and labored tirelessly in the work of preaching the Gospel. On April 26, 1835, in the city
of Kirtland, Ohio, Orson Pratt was ordained an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ—a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, second governing body of the young Church. David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery—apostles and close associates of the Prophet from the earliest days of the Church—performed the ordination.

From his earliest days as an inquisitive youth Orson had diligently sought education and learning. He seemed to display an ever-increasing passion for scientific and mathematical knowledge as responsibilities and church assignments multiplied to occupy his thoughts and time. One historian quotes him as follows:

"From 1836 to 1844" says the Apostle, "I occupied much of my leisure time in study, and made myself thoroughly acquainted with algebra, geometry, trigonometry, conic sections, differential and integral calculus, astronomy, and most of the physical sciences. These studies I pursued without the assistance of a teacher."¹

Orson's determination, combustible energy, and ability to teach himself more than offset whatever disadvantages may have encumbered him because of insufficient funds to pursue formal education.

Professor Pratt was a self-educated man, and like many of his brethren, he had to struggle on through poverty, sustain his family, preach the Gospel and attend to the varied duties of his calling in the Priesthood. But amidst all this, he was a most devoted student of the sciences of mathematics and astronomy.²


Pratt was singularly devoted to the work of the Church between the years 1830 and 1879. He completed sixteen missions to the eastern United States and seven to Great Britain where he presided over the proselyting work as well as editing the mission publication, the Millennial Star.\(^1\) "While editing the Millennial Star, he wrote, published and distributed many pamphlets on philosophical themes, and with means obtained from the sale of his works, supplied the urgent needs of a portion of his family who were still on the Iowa frontier."\(^2\)

Pratt provided academic leadership of an invaluable caliber during the sojourn of the Latter-day Saints in the state of Illinois. He was elected Professor of Mathematics in the University of Nauvoo. The degree of Master of Arts was conferred on him by the chancellor and board of regents of that institution.\(^3\) Pratt again rendered devoted service to the cause of education subsequent to the Mormon exodus to Utah. Dr. George H. Brimhall, former president of Brigham Young University, wrote an article discussing the evolution of Utah education in which he referred to Orson Pratt, the famed philosopher and mathematician, as standing at the head of the lineup of departed Utah educators.\(^4\) Levi Edgar Young, another

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\(^1\)Bayard Mendenhall, *The Philosophic and Scientific Works of Orson Pratt*, a paper presented before the Timpanogos Club, Salt Lake City, April 15, 1943.


\(^3\)P.H.C., *Vol. 4*, p. 414.

great Utah educator, said the following:

A word about Orson Pratt. He was a great student of theology and philosophy. He was a scientist as well, and his book on Biquadratic Equations was published in London in the early sixties. Genius is always original; but Orson Pratt had genius of a subtle kind. In a new country with but few opportunities, he outstripped all with his learning. His mind took in the largest ideas, and held them firmly. He read John Locke and was a life long student of Emanuel Kant, whose books he read in the original German. A thinker from boyhood, he learned to write in his youth. A keen observer in natural science, he reasoned out many principles afterwards discovered by experiment. A profound mathematician, "he had a keen wit, and a potential imagination." He used to say; "Let me live with all my might while I do live." Orson Pratt was one of the great thinkers in American History.1

Orson Pratt's history was interwoven with that of the great westward movement of the pioneers. He had the distinction of being the first member of the original party to enter the valley of the Great Salt Lake. His contributions to the success of the exodus were many. Among them was the invention of a device which could be attached to the axles of the wagons and served to count the miles by the rotation of the wheels. He kept careful records of the crossing of the plains and has given us much of the history of that memorable march.

The contributions of this great pioneer became no less significant as the empire began to grow. Pratt, assisted by Henry G. Sherwood, ran the first survey of Salt Lake City about a week after the arrival of the first company of pioneers. He ascertained the latitude, longitude and altitude of the valley. He also laid out the town that became Salt Lake City, being

1Levi Edgar Young, in Improvement Era, Vol. 28, p. 154.
assigned the task by Brigham Young.¹ This accomplishment alone has been eulogized by great numbers of the city's visitors down through the generations.

Pratt's scholastic genius was employed to arrange the modern scriptures—the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants—as we know them today. He divided both these works into chapters and verses, with footnotes and references.² His civic contributions were no less impressive. He was elected a member of the first Utah Territorial Legislature and served on that body six times thereafter.³ He occupied the position of speaker of the House of Representatives during several of its sessions.⁴

Orson Pratt was sustained Church Historian in a general conference of the Church in 1874. He held the position for the remainder of his life. He traveled again to Europe and throughout much of the United States retracing scenes from the early history of the Church while in the exercise of his historian's office. He died in his home in Salt Lake City, October 3, 1881, at the summit of seventy rich years. He dictated his own epitaph to President Joseph F. Smith just before passing on: "My body sleeps for a moment, but my testimony lives and shall endure forever."⁵

¹N. B. Lundwall, Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Publishers), p. 15.
²Ibid., p. 9.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid., p. 16.
⁵Ibid., p. 18.
Orson Pratt's stature was such that during general conference, October 1911, Church Historian Orson F. Whitney referred to him by saying:

One hundred years ago, in a humble village of the Empire State, a man was born of whom it was said, as he lay in his casket at Salt Lake City on the 6th of October 1861, that he had traveled more miles, preached more sermons, studied and written more upon the Gospel and upon science, than any other man in the Church. That man was Orson Pratt, and the speaker who eulogized him was Wilford Woodruff, his fellow Apostle and Pioneer. . . .

The "St. Paul of Mormondom"—as Tullidge styles him, was a preacher eloquent and powerful, a theologian learned and profound, a linguist to whom dead languages were an open book, a writer lucid and logical, a scientist of eminent attainments. Essentially a sage, having the philosophical temperament as well as the philosophical cast of mind, he might easily have been classed with the Wise Men of Greece, or even with the Hebrew Prophets.1

Nor were Orson Pratt's works known only to his own people. It is recorded that when Professor Richard Anthony Proctor, noted astronomer and honorary secretary of Britain's Royal Astronomical Society, lectured in Salt Lake City, he remarked that in his opinion there were only four real mathematicians in the world at that time and that Orson Pratt was one of them.2 The Professor is also reputed to have made the observation that "Orson Pratt's works on astronomy were entitled to the admiration and respect of the scientific world."3

There can be little doubt that in the person of Orson Pratt was to be found an intellect of extraordinary proportions.

1Conference Reports, October 1911, p. 62, 66. Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.


3Ibid., p. 461.
This, combined with almost inexhaustible academic vitality, devotion to truth and knowledge, and dedication to righteousness, is more than sufficient justification for careful examination of his philosophic experiments and conclusions. It is natural that he was handicapped by the scientific limitations of his day. Such has been the case with all who have delved into metaphysical speculation. It is also possible that he could have more fruitfully performed the necessary scientific experiments to substantiate his theories had he been endowed with more of the world's riches. Subsequent experimentation has dealt kindly, in some cases—harshly in others—with the products of his thought. There remains much upon which no judgment has as yet been passed because of the depth of his speculation. Nor can any justifiable evaluation be made until man's scientific capability advances considerably further than it is today.

A great deal of Pratt's philosophic thought carries important theological implication because of his spiritual nature and active participation in the field of religion. Some have suggested that he was responsible for the foundation of Joseph Smith's philosophic thought and for doctrinal elements that may appear to have grown out of it. There seems to be little or no justification for this conclusion as is pointed out by T. Edgar Lyon in his thesis.\(^1\) It seems much more prob-

able that Joseph Smith, and recognized Church doctrine, provided Orson Pratt with the ideas he labored so diligently to expand by his own reasoning. Chapter Five of this thesis is devoted to the implications of this question.

Orson Pratt's identification as a leader in the Mormon movement stimulates interest in the possibility that his philosophy was representative of the Church itself. It will be pointed out in subsequent chapters that such was definitely not the case. Even Pratt himself required official clarification on the point. At any rate the youthful Apostle demonstrated the vitality of Mormonism and its leaders by his vigorous outcries against established tradition. The uniqueness of the position from which he spoke is undeniable.

In the year 1830, world consciousness was forced to recognize the establishment of a church that sustained as its earthly leader a youthful Prophet who claimed to have seen Deity in the flesh. All existing churches, theologies, and philosophical systems were shaken by the metaphysical implications of the allegation. The very foundations of ancient as well as modern concepts of the Supreme Being, creation, reality, and knowledge were jeopardized. Nor was this new movement characterized by the tender-footed, feel-your-way-along timidity one might expect to accompany this radical type of dogma. Rather, its missionaries were authorized to proclaim in categorical terms the antithesis of that which had become accepted throughout the Christian world. Orson Pratt was such an envoy.
CHAPTER II

ORSON PRATT'S MATERIALISM

Opposition to Trinitarianism.--Orson Pratt at one time presided over the European missions of the Church. Headquarters were in Liverpool, England. While there he wrote and published a series of religious tracts entitled The Kingdom of God. Part I of the series contained doctrine that stirred up considerable excitement among theologians in the areas of its circulation. Pratt's attack on traditional concepts of trinitarianism was initiated by the following declaration:

The Godhead consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is a material being. The substance of which he is composed is wholly material. It is a substance widely different in some respects from the various substances with which we are more immediately acquainted. In other respects it is precisely like all other materials. The substance of his person occupies space the same as other matter. It has solidity, length, breadth, and thickness, like all other matter. The elementary materials of his body are not susceptible of occupying, at the same time, the same identical space with other matter. The substance of his person, like other matter, cannot be in two places at the same instant.¹

Pratt further described the person of the Father, then affirmed that, "All the foregoing statements in relation to

¹Orson Pratt, Kingdom of God, (Liverpool: 1848), Part I, p. 4.
the person of the Father, are equally applicable to the person of the Son."

Reaction and Counter-reaction.—The foregoing quotation from the Kingdom of God tract of 1848 is not the earliest published reference to Pratt's materialism. It echoes opinions he had published in the United States two years earlier. He attracted considerable attention in 1846 with his theses that, (1) God the Father is material; (2) Jesus Christ is material; (3) the universe is material; (4) angels are material; (5) men are material; (6) the elementary principles of the material universe are eternal; they never originated from nonentity, and they can never be annihilated; (7) nothing exists which is not material; (8) space is full of materiality; and (9) immateriality is but another name for nonentity—-it is the negative of all things and beings—of all existence. He retained these theses as a basis for his later materialistic theories.

Statements of this nature apparently touched off excited reactions in religious circles and drew challenges from some whose theology stood to be damaged by such doctrine. Indicative of Pratt's attitude regarding such challenges is his statement, "Convince us of our errors of doctrine, if we have

1Orson Pratt, Kingdom of God, (Liverpool: 1848), Part I, p. 4.

2Ibid.
any, by reason, by logical arguments, or by the Word of God, and we will be ever grateful for the information."

T. W. P. Taylder, a noted British Theologian of that day, published a pamphlet entitled, The Materialism of the Mormons or Latter-day Saints, Examined and Exposed. Taylder also resided and published in Liverpool in 1849. The pamphlet was obviously designed to discredit the several theses previously enumerated. Pratt could scarcely have failed to anticipate the reaction his tracts would detonate in theological circles. He had expressed himself in unequivocal terms and had directed his remarks unmistakably against traditional Christianity. His argument began with a denial of the existence of any immaterial substance and ended with a challenge for any man to name one. The term itself, Pratt declared, was an absurdity:

There is not one particle of proof to be advanced to establish its existence. It has no way to manifest itself to any intelligence in heaven or on earth. Neither God, angels or men, could possibly conceive of such a substance, being or thing. It possesses no property or power by which to make itself manifest, to any intelligent being in the universe. Reason and analogy never scan it, or even conceive of it. Revelation never reveals it, nor do any of our senses witness its existence. It cannot be seen, felt, heard, tasted, or smelled, even by the strongest organs, or the most acute sensibilities. It is neither liquid or solid, soft or hard,—it can neither extend nor contract. In short, it can exert no influence whatever—it can neither act, nor be acted upon. And even if it does exist, it is of no possible use. It possesses no one desirable property, faculty or use, yet, strange to say, "Immateriality" is the modern Christian's God, his anticipated heaven, his immortal self—his all.


2Prophetic Almanac for Dec., 1846.
Taylder's opinion of Pratt's concepts was clearly expressed in the former's conclusion that they appeared to be "Irrational, opposed to true philosophy, unscriptural and anti-scriptural, of no utility to man, and derogatory to God."\(^1\)

Taylder cited the Pythagoreans, Platonists and Stoics as having believed that man is composed of body, spirit and soul. This he did in an attempt to supply an example of an immaterial substance. He also cited Genesis 2:7,

> The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground (the body) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (the spirit); and man became a living soul (the living, sensitive part.) In this respect man may be considered very justly as a faint emblem of the existence of the Godhead.\(^2\)

The British theologian thus implied his concept that spirit is purely immaterial and is capable of separation from the body. It can exist independently of the body. The soul, he suggested, is something distinct from that which is pure spirit. Soul is the seat of the affections. He admitted, however, that the term "soul" is frequently used synonymously with pure mind or spirit. The body is that material part which was formed out of the dust of the ground, and is the medium through which the mind is manifested.\(^3\)

Taylder argued that, "As therefore the

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\(^2\)Ibid., p. 50.

\(^3\)Ibid.
soul is frequently held as immaterial and synonymous with the mind or spirit, it is necessary only to consider spirit and matter."

**Attack on Immaterialism.**--Pratt wrote and published his tract entitled *Absurdities of Immaterialism* in refutation of Taylder's conviction that spirit is immaterial expressed in the Englishman's pamphlet. Pratt's reply is his principal treatise on materialism. None of his later writings show any dissatisfaction with or alteration of the fundamental ideas expressed in it.

Pratt would accept nothing in support of immaterialism except proof of the existence of a substance which is not material. It was not sufficient that an "immaterial substance" must have only some properties and qualities distinct from other matter. All matter is understood to have some distinctive characteristics since no two particular examples of matter are identical in all respects. Similarly, each form of matter has characteristics common to all forms of matter. He therefore insisted that an immaterial substance must have NO property or quality in common with matter in any form. Such a substance could have no size, shape, weight, location, density, temperature, molecular composition, or any other of the innumerable properties and qualities common to all instances of matter.

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1Ibid.

Pratt recognized the existence of what he called first or self-evident truths. He employed these in his argument against the possible existence of an immaterial substance. These first truths seem to correspond to what would be called "principles" by present-day philosophers of science such as Russell, Burtt, and Campbell. Pratt described them as foundations of reasoning which must be admitted without demonstration because there are no simpler truths which can be adduced by which to establish them. Such a self-evident truth, for Pratt, is the necessity of spatial and temporal relationships being essential to the existence of all substance.\(^1\) He set up the following definitions to invite clearer understanding of his argument:

1. Space is magnitude, susceptible of division.
2. A Point is the negative of space, or the zero at which a magnitude begins or terminates; it is not susceptible of division.
3. Duration is not magnitude, but time susceptible of division.
4. An Instant is the negative of duration, or the zero at which duration begins or terminates; it is not susceptible of division.
5. Matter is something that occupies space between any two instances, and is susceptible of division and of being removed from one portion of space to another.
6. Nothing is the negative of space, of duration, and of matter; it is the zero of all existence.\(^2\)

It was Pratt's belief that both space and duration have only one quality—divisibility. They have no other properties or qualities of any description.\(^3\) They cannot be otherwise

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 11.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 10.
\(^3\)Ibid.
described although both may be encumbered by various synonymous terms. "Infinite space can only be distinguished from duration by certain imaginary qualities, which can be assigned to finite portions of it, but which cannot be assigned to duration."¹

He seemed to maintain that both time and space are merely useful ideas which permit the formation of relationships. These ideas have some corresponding reality, he admitted, but little can be known about real time and space. The usefulness derived from spatial and temporal concepts must come from imaginary qualities attributed to imaginary segments of the imaginary wholes.

Isaac Taylor was cited as typifying the immaterialist point of view of that day. Pratt referred to Taylor's statement to the effect that a disembodied spirit—believed to be an immaterial substance by both Taylor and T.W.P. Taylder—cannot be considered to exist in any place. It is, indeed, nowhere. Taylor also said, "That which is wholly abstracted from matter, and in speaking of which we deny that it has any property in common therewith, can in itself be subjected to none of its conditions."² Pratt reiterated his contention that duration is an essential condition to the existence of matter. He accused the immaterialists of denying any relationship between immaterial substance, time, and space. If an immaterial

¹Ibid.

substance is nowhere, it occupies no space and has no magnitude. It is, therefore, an unextended point. According to Pratt's cited definitions two and six, it must be defined as "Nothing." Similarly, if an immaterial substance is not subjected to the conditions of duration, it must be considered an instant, or the negative of duration. Pratt again defined immaterial substance as "Nothing" by virtue of definitions four and six. Hence the existence of an immaterial substance is impossible since it can exist in no place at no time.\footnote{Ibid., p. 11.}

T. W. P. Taylder did not attempt to answer Pratt's arguments. The Immaterialist's only relevant comment appeared in one of his later publications. It said, in essence, that he did not consider his initial arguments sufficiently damaged by Pratt's replies to require reinforcement.

**Eternality of Matter.**--Pratt believed reason to reveal that matter had no origin. If it began at any time there must have been an infinity of time prior to its existence during which there was nothing but boundless space. Space is incapable of producing anything from within its own void since it is immovable and has no power or force of any kind. Matter must have been created by something or someone whose existence was prior to that of matter in any form if it can be said to have had a beginning. Yet, Pratt argued, if such a thing or being existed it must have been substantial and therefore composed of one or a collection of the elementary atoms of which
all matter is made. This cause was either eternal or created
by a still prior cause. The creator of matter must be consid-
ered eternal if an infinite regress is to be avoided. The
eternal existence of a part of matter implies the possibility
of the eternal existence of the whole, Pratt argued. It is
therefore reasonable to believe that the elementary particles
of all matter existed eternally and were not created. He did
not deny that complex matter may have been organized from these
elementary particles, however. 1

Ultimate Particles.—Matter is "Every substance in
space, whether visible or invisible, sensible or insensible,
intelligent or unintelligent," according to Pratt. 2 Its ele-
mental particles are infinitesimally minute, immutable, solid,
movable, impenetrable atoms which can be neither expanded,
condensed, nor destroyed. He admitted having no knowledge of
their actual magnitude, nor of their shapes and figures, but
supposed them to be spheres or spheroids.

Solidity.—Pratt insisted that solidity is not a pro-
erty, but the very essence of all substances. This was another
of his self-evident truths. He realized that atoms could not
be observed, nor could he point to more fundamental truths to
support a rational structure. He simply found it impossible
to conceive of atoms separate and apart from solidity. "A
property must be a property of something; but solidity is not

1Orson Pratt, "Origin of Man," Millennial Star, Vol. 6,
pp. 157-159.

2Ibid.
a property of anything--it is the essence itself--the thing that exists, aside from all properties and powers."¹ He also asserted that solidity is the only existential essence.

When the essence of solidity of substance is considered by itself, independently of its powers, there cannot possibly be any difference in atoms only in their magnitude and form. The essence of all substance is precisely alike when the essence alone is considered.²

By "solidity" he meant that, since all substance is composed of one or a combination of elementary atoms, it can at no time occupy either more or less space than at any other time. The sum total of the absolute space occupied by any substance, whether simple or compound, will--under any and all circumstances--be the sum total of the absolute space occupied by the elementary atoms of which that substance consists. Pratt denied that condensation and expansion are properties of the ultimate atoms of which bodies are composed. They are, rather, a relationship of the comprising atoms. If a body is found to be in a state of maximum density, the absolute space it fills is said to be wholly occupied. Further condensation is therefore impossible. Contrarily, a body is said to be porous, to one degree or another, if the atoms of which it is composed are not in the closest possible proximity to each other. In any case, whether a given body is condensed or expanded, it can under no circumstances occupy more or less space than is occupied by the solid atoms of its composition. "Deprive atoms of

¹A.I., p. 17.
²Ibid.
solidity, and they are deprived not of a property, but of existence itself, and nothing remains." Pratt thus equated solidity and material existence. "Substances," he declared, "can only differ in their magnitude, form, and susceptibilities, but not in their essences, for they are and must be alike."2

Motion of Matter.--The Newtonian theory of attraction of atoms was being widely accepted during the time of Pratt's writings on materialism. Pratt attacked Newton's theory and denied that attraction was a property of atoms. His attack seems to have been stimulated by his recognition that those who followed Newton's theory also subscribed to the theory that inertia is also a property of matter. They believed matter to be passive and powerless to change its own state. It seemed to Pratt that if an atom--or matter of any description--lacked power to move itself, it could not possibly have power to move anything external to itself. He asserted that it was the very height of absurdity to suppose an atom could move everything in the universe but itself.3 He further contended that "For matter to draw distant matter toward itself, and consequently act where it is not present, would be as utterly impossible as it would be for a person to be in two or more places at the same time."4 He was sure that all the phenomena of

1Ibid.
2Ibid.
3M.S., Vol. 6, pp. 173-175.
4A.I., p. 31.
universal gravitation could be explained by the use of more simple and consistent principles. His own theory of the contact and combination of atoms will be explained in the chapter on Causation.

Unity of Self; Thoughts and Affections.--The Immaterialist's only argument that Pratt seemed to find tolerable is based upon their contention that a thinking substance is inextended and indivisible, therefore not material. The self-consciousness of the individual unity of a thinking substance was felt to be inconsistent with a multiplicity of parts. Pratt quoted the lectures of Dr. Thomas Brown entitled Philosophy of the Human Mind to indicate that Immaterialists considered the notions of plurality and divisibility to be inconsistent with the notion of self.

A unity of substance, consisting of parts, is supposed by Dr. Brown and other immaterialists to be, not only relatively, but absolutely absurd. But this supposed absurdity is only imaginary, and is founded wholly on supposition and false reasoning, and not on our self-consciousness. Self-consciousness teaches us the unity of self, but it does not teach us that a unity of self is inconsistent with a plurality of parts, and consequently inextended.

Pratt maintained, contrary to Brown's supposition, that the very notion of unity incorporates an awareness of multiplicity of the parts which comprise that unity. He asserted

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1Pratt established the theory that, rather than attract other atoms to themselves, atoms are capable of moving themselves toward other atoms. He thus called them "self-moving," or "intelligent" particles.

2A.I., p. 17.

3Ibid., p. 18.
that there can indeed be no unity without parts. His conclusion, then, was that the self-consciousness of unity of self is actual demonstration of awareness of the plurality of parts of a thinking substance. The extension of thinking substance is thus demonstrated. ¹ Pratt pointed out that if the oneness of mind is evidence of its lack of parts, therefore its extension and its immateriality, then no ultimate atom in the universe could be considered extended and compound. This would exclude the possibility of the existence of any material thing.² The combining of unextended atoms could certainly not result in the production of extended matter.

Pratt next pointed to two hypotheses that were being considered by thinkers of that day. The first—largely advocated by naturalists and evolutionists such as Darwin—suggested that thoughts and affections of various kinds are properties of an organized plurality of particles, but not of the individual parts. The second hypothesis described thoughts, feelings, emotions and the like, as small particles of matter in and of themselves. Pratt found both suggestions intolerable and substituted one of his own:

A thought, hope, fear, joy, or any other feeling is not a little particle of matter, nor the result or quality of a collection of particles, called an organ or a system of organs, but it is the state or affection of a single individual substance, having extension and parts, and all the essential characteristics belonging to all other matter.³

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid., p. 20.
Thoughts, feelings and emotions, then, are "states or affections" of substantial particles rather than particles themselves or qualities of collections of particles. Pratt seemed to suggest that every atom of a thinking substance is capable of sustaining the same state or affection as is the whole. The properties of the entire are the properties of each individual atom. A unity exists when each part is so closely connected and in such perfect harmony with every other part that the state of one is the state of all. "If one part be affected with pain, every other part must be conscious of it. If one part rejoices, hopes, or fears, the whole must, by sympathy, rejoice, hope, or fear in the same manner."¹ This condition became a necessary part of Pratt's definition of unity, oneness, self. The unity is destroyed when one part sustains thought, pain or joy, etc., while another part is unconscious of that state. Individual unity is exploded into as many individual substances as there are parts unconscious of the conditions of other parts of the whole.

It is, therefore, because all parts of the mind seem to be affected in the same way, and apparently at the same time, that it is felt to be a single individual mind. It is this, and this only, that constitutes the unity of a thinking being, and not, as the immaterialist asserts, a something "without parts," which from its very nature could constitute neither a unity, nor plurality, nor any thing else, but nothing.²

Spirit.—It has already been affirmed that the immaterialist point of view excluded mind from the substantial

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 21.
world. Equating mind and spirit, the latter also became immaterial although the Christian immaterialist would be the last to deny that it is real. Orson Pratt declared that spiritual substance is wholly material. He again cited Dr. Thomas Brown as representative of the immaterialist position. He referred to Brown's contention that extension and resistance are the elements of which matter is composed. Brown further asserted that nothing which does not involve these elements can be considered a body, or material. "Figure, magnitude, divisibility, are only different modifications of extension. Solidity, liquidity, viscosity, hardness, softness, roughness, smoothness, are different modifications of resistance. All these terms are only extension and resistance, modified in a certain degree, and under other names."  

Time and Space.--Pratt reverted to his previous argument. He reaffirmed that not only must an immaterial substance be void of qualities of extension and resistance, as Brown suggests, but that it must also have no relationship to time and space. Neither must it be susceptible to acting upon or being acted upon by matter of any description. It has already been pointed out that Pratt found these demands of definition entirely irreconcilable with any type of real substance whatsoever. "Imagine a spirit, if possible, occupying no room on the outside of the bounds of a boundless space."  

1Ibid., p. 13. Pratt quoting Brown's lectures, Philosophy of the Human Mind.  

2Ibid.
exclaimed, could be more unphilosophical, contradictory, and absurd.

Spirit or mind most surely has a relationship to time or duration, Pratt insisted. The act of remembering is ample demonstration of such a relationship. That the mind knows itself to be the same self that has consciously existed over a given period of time, whether minute or lengthy, indicates strongly that mind or spirit bears the closest possible relationship with duration. What substance, excluding mind, is aware of time? Is time, indeed, a reality except in relation to mind? It is only through imagining qualities of segments of time and space that a distinction can be made between the two, as he previously explained.

That mind or spirit bears a relationship to space is evident from the same reasoning. The concept of hereeness and thereeness are functions solely of mind. A more simple illustration, however, is the basic concept of the location of mind or spirit within a body. If a cognitive body occupies space, or is in relationship to space, then no point within the body can possibly be void of a similar relationship. Pratt indicated the inconsistency of believing a substance of any kind to exist "nowhere." Even an unextended point is located in space. Spirit, then, if it has no location, would have to be less than a point. "A point is a located nothing, but an unextended substance is nothing, having no location."1

1 Ibid., p. 12.
All matter, including mind, can be removed. Mind travels from place to place with the body. Inasmuch as the body changes physical location, so mind's location in space is altered. Pratt also mentioned the rotation of the earth as an instance of matter moving mind. The earth itself would serve as a relocator of mind in space even if men could not move themselves from place to place. Few would fail to define the earth as a material entity, yet an immaterial substance is thought to be unsusceptible to movement by any material thing. Motion, Pratt continued, involves both time and space. It is clear that, since motion cannot be instantaneous--thus requiring matter to be in many locations at the same time--time is required to elapse between the beginning and end of the movement of an object. Nor has the object moved at all if not from place to place--unless it simply rotated in one spot. Even then, segments of the object change location and are in different spatial relationships during the rotation even if the object should come to rest in the identical position it occupied prior to the motion.

Pratt pointed to many forms of commonly accepted matter which cannot be known to be material by muscular resistance. This was by way of refutation of Brown's resistance criterion.¹

¹Ibid., p. 13. From Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind, lectures XX to XXIX inclusive, Pratt interpreted Brown as believing our notion of resistance as being obtained through muscular organs. The exertion of our muscles must be excited by something from without. The muscles, in turn, excite the mind to the feeling of resistance. "The feeling of resistance combined with the feeling of extension gives us the notion of
One such example is a ray of light. How can the material particles of light be put to the resistance test? Another is fragrance, or odor, the composition of which is believed to be tiny particles of matter effervescing from the body they represent. "No one in speaking of a rose would think of classifying heat and light as a portion of its solid substance; yet both heat and light, like the particles of odour, are intimately connected with it and are constantly being thrown off from it."¹

How then, Pratt wished to know, is it possible to submit these commonly accepted forms of matter to Brown's tests of extension and resistance? It might well have been pointed out that the atom--basic component of all matter according to popular theories both then and now--has not yet been submitted to these same tests, yet its substantial nature was not doubted even by the immaterialists. Pratt felt it would be impossible for unextended mind to receive stimuli or sensations from things outside itself. It could neither act nor be acted upon by an extended body.²

Mind and Body.—Orson Pratt's opinion was that the solution to the dilemma lay in admitting the principle that had been the object of dualistic philosopher's attack through the centuries, namely, that the mind or spirit is as substantial--

¹Ibid., p. 14.
²Ibid., p. 15.
as surely extended and material—as the body. The centuries-old search for a solution to the mystery of interaction of mind and body produced no adequate explanation of the phenomena. None of the hypotheses proposed by a long line of philosophers and theologians—including some of history’s greatest thinkers—satisfied the demand for more than a relatively short period of time. Mind had been assumed to be immaterial to accommodate certain theological concepts, and the assumption was maintained dogmatically under the influence of the dominant church.

"Spirit is as much matter as oxygen or hydrogen," Pratt attested. It holds much in common with all matter although differing in many other respects from various forms of matter. The principle difference in spiritual substance is "only the addition of another element of a more powerful nature than any yet discovered."¹

The absence of evidence supporting an intervening cause between body and mind was felt by Pratt to be the strongest possible indication that, in this interaction, matter acts upon matter. Observation of the intercourse between external organs and the mind is phenomena of the most common kind. No problem is raised when matter is observed to affect other matter in innumerable instances every moment. The mind is similarly affected by light rays upon the retina of the eye, or by the particles which produce odor through the olfactory nerves. Pratt failed to see why the mind should be referred to as im-

¹K.G., Part I, p. 4.
material more than other substances which are commonly affected by other matter.\(^1\)

Referring again to Brown's test of resistance, Pratt supposed the mind to be the very cause of muscular resistance. It is through the direction of the mind that muscles act at all. Muscles of the body seem powerless to resist anything of their own volition. Mind, on the other hand, is the true resister and uses the body as the instrument of that resistance. If that which causes resistance is material, then mind—more than any other thing—justifies such a designation.\(^2\)

Dimension.—Pratt denied that any two atoms of spiritual matter, any more than matter of any sort, can occupy the same space at the same time. Nor can any single atom of spiritual substance occupy two or more places at once. He declared the above law to be true without exception although pressed by Taylder as to how a material spirit could occupy the same space as a material body. The seemingly identical location of spirit and body is no infraction of the law. The body and spirit each occupy their own space in union with each other. Pratt reasoned that all bodies are subject to laws of condensation which proves that, in their natural states, bodies are not in a condition of maximum density. All bodies are therefore porous and there is unoccupied space between their component particles.

Simple experiments of reduction of dimension of bodies without

\(^1\)A.I., p. 15.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 16.
changing their masses bear out this contention. Under these conditions there is ample room for a material spirit to occupy space within the boundaries of a material body without violating the laws involved. Atoms of spiritual substance simply occupy the space that exists between atoms of physical substance. The location of the spirit may correctly be described as being within the body under these circumstances. 1

Several explanations under the terms of Pratt's theory are apparent when considering the peculiar situation of many spirits occupying one body as is illustrated in the scriptures. 2 Without complete knowledge of the exact sizes of either physical or spiritual particles, for instance, it is conceivable that there is sufficient unoccupied or void space in every natural body to accommodate innumerable spirits. No change of any description may be required to facilitate such occupancy. Secondly, it is not unthinkable that--through the laws of contraction and condensation--the particles of each of the plurality of spirits were compressed in their relationships to each other. This would permit the reduction of dimension (without a change of mass) required to satisfy the demands. Thus it is again conceivable that innumerable spirits could have been housed by a single physical body. Pratt believed this to be a much more logical explanation than Tayler's, viz., that the substances of all the spirits involved--as well as the substance


2 *See Bible*, Luke 8:2; 8:26-33.
of the body which accommodated them—occupied the same actual space. Condensation, Pratt declared, is exemplified repeatedly in our experience. Simultaneous occupation of identical actual space by plural instances of matter is unheard of in man's experience. It violates all pertinent laws about which we know anything.¹

Conclusion.—Orson Pratt may in a sense be called a dualist although not in the ordinary philosophical context of the name. He published writings in 1853—four years after the publication of his treatise on materialism—in which he expressed his opinion that every living thing was composed of two basic parts, viz., body and spirit. He claimed that both are matter of widely separate varieties, however, whereas typical dualists distinguish the concept of material body and immaterial mind or spirit. Elements of matter such as oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, lime, and so forth, chemically combined, for the flesh, bones, arteries, nerves, muscles, sinews and skin of physical bodies. In connection with each corporeal body made up of these relatively coarse materials, is a spirit composed of finer, more highly developed matter.

This spiritual substance possesses properties and qualities far superior to some other forms of matter as well as possessing many qualities in common with all other matter. The spirits of all things, he further believed, are in the image

¹Ibid., p. 24.
and likeness of their natural or physical bodies, and are of the same magnitude.

It is this spiritual substance, and not the body, that sees, hears, smells, tastes, feels, thinks, enjoys, suffers, and manifests every other affection or passion characteristic of the animal creation—none of the spirits of the whole animal creation are disorganized by the death of the body but are capable of feeling, thinking, moving, enjoying, suffering, out of the body as well as in it. They are eternal, and will exist forever, capable of joy and happiness.¹

The organized spirit is the life of all living things, Pratt maintained.² Unlike the material elements of the body it will not decompose having once been organized. The spirit also has the capacity to retain memory of all past happenings. Pratt was referring to the spirit of man in making this assertion, however, and did not necessarily imply that all spirits have such a capacity.³

Spiritual matter, then, is equally susceptible to organization and unity as is physical matter. It occupies space co-eternally with physical matter in that it is composed of the same kind of ultimate atoms. Pratt admitted that all characteristics of atoms in their more complex states of organization are not identical. He affirmed, however, that particles of both physical and spiritual matter are solid, extended, movable, and have many other properties and qualities in common.

¹Orson Pratt, "The Figure and Magnitude of Spirits," The Seer, (Washington, D.C., 1853). Quoted by Bayard Mendenhall in the paper previously cited.
²Ibid.
Perhaps the most important common characteristic is their equal relationship to time and space. He therefore concluded that there is in existence no such thing as an "immaterial substance." This is the essence of his materialism.
CHAPTER III

PRATT'S THEORY OF CAUSATION

Absurdities of Creation Ex-Nihilo.--Certain truths were thought by Orson Pratt to have been first or necessary truths as was pointed out in the preceding chapter. These are so because they cannot be conceived to be otherwise. They require no proof and are indeed not susceptible to proof because there is nothing more fundamental than themselves by which they can be proved. The boundlessness of space and the endlessness of duration are two such principles. It was inconceivable to him that any location could be designated outside the bounds of space or that space was restricted by any line of limitation the other side of which there was no space. The possibility that duration had either a beginning or an end was equally unthinkable. If such bounds are to be placed on duration, explanation must be given why it is possible to conceive of a before and an after in relation to duration. Pratt claimed no knowledge as to the reasons why space is boundless and duration endless. Yet he was able to see the necessity for them to be so.¹

¹Orson Pratt, Great First Cause, (Liverpool: by the Author, 1851), p. 1.
The belief that something exists in space was equally justifiable to this philosopher. Pratt would not, however, call this a first or necessary truth since he found it possible to conceive of space that contained nothing. He reasoned that if he could conceive of a part of space containing nothing, it would then be possible that all space contained nothing. That some space is void of occupancy is demonstrated by observable motion. Space would be a boundless, imporous solid where no motion could possibly exist if it were wholly occupied. The would-be movers, unable to occupy space filled by other matter, would have no place to go. This simple observation enabled Pratt to believe that some space was not wholly occupied. It was, therefore, just as easy for him to conceive the possibility of all space being empty and that nothing whatsoever existed. Space could be either totally void of occupancy, wholly occupied, or occupied to any degree between the two. Again, why any one of these conditions should exist rather than any other was inconceivable.

We perceive that we ourselves exist, and that things exist external to ourselves, but we perceive no necessity for our own existence or for the existence of any thing else. Therefore the existence of things in space, and the quantity of things in space, are not conceived to be what they are by any irresistible necessity such as characterizes our conceptions of space and duration.¹

Pratt reiterated his belief that if something now exists, something must have always existed.² He concluded

¹Ibid., p. 2.
²See Chapter II, p. 22.
from this that it is conceivable and probable that at least
the ultimate substance of all things always existed and was
not created per se. He used the following reasoning to estab-
lish this thesis: (1) It is not a necessary truth that some
things were created from nothing while other things always ex-
isted, i.e., Deity. No more difficulty is encountered in be-
lieving all substance to have existed eternally than in believ-
ing a part of that which can be called substantial to have
existed eternally. The same principles are involved in the
conception of each. (2) The creation of a part of matter by
another part is not an experimental truth, for it has never
been observed by man. All that man has "created" has been or-
ganized from already existing elements. (3) Reason does not
reveal that something can be created from nothing, for deduc-
tive reasoning is founded upon principles, axioms, fundamental
or first truths. No such principles can be found which apply
to such a hypothesis, nor which can be used as a starting place
for deductive reasoning. (4) Analogy cannot be used to estab-
lish the hypothesis, for no paralleling example of an event
which approximates the conditions required by creation ex-nihilo
can be found. (5) The hypothesis cannot be established as a
divine, or revealed truth. The term creation, as used in the
scriptures, need not imply creation from nothing. God created
man out of the dust of the earth—or out of previously existing
elements. God created the heavens and the earth, the sun, moon,
stars, and so forth, but out of what—whether something or nothing—it is not revealed.

The Creation-Issue.—God created all things. If "all things" includes the ultimate substances out of which all organized bodies are formed, it must also include the ultimate substance of which God Himself is composed. This places God in the impossible situation of existing and not existing simultaneously. "All things," then, cannot include the elements themselves, but only those things which are created out of the elements. If creation from nothing is not a necessary, experimental, reasonable, analogical, or revealed truth, there is little evidence to support it at all. It is, therefore, not illogical to believe that the elements and substance of all things existed eternally.\(^1\)

Pratt pointed out that it has been the opinion of Christian theologians through the centuries that light, a material substance, came into being when God so commanded it in connection with the creation of the Earth. Most of the thinkers so opinionated also believed the earth to have been created some six thousand years ago. Others subscribed to moderate scientific estimates somewhat longer. Pratt attacked the concept on empirical grounds. He called attention to the science of astronomy and the fact that man has penetrated portions of the universe with his eye:

\(^1\)G.F.C., p. 3.
Astronomers have demonstrated by actual observation and mathematical calculation that light existed thousands of years before the creation of our earth. It has been determined that light flies with the velocity of about twelve millions of miles every minute; it has also been ascertained from the known power of the telescope, and from other considerations, that there are bodies in the universe, situated at such immense distances, that it would require their light several hundred thousand years to traverse the space between them and our world; it follows, then, of necessity, that the light by which those distant worlds are now rendered visible must have left them thousands of centuries before our earth was formed. In almost every point of space to which the telescope has been directed, countless millions of inconceivably distant shining worlds are to be seen. But what does all this prove? It proves that by far the greater portion of the visible universe existed ages before the organization of our little globe.1

Pratt went on to point out that the light by which we see distant planets and stars tells us nothing about their present state. They may have ceased to exist as organized bodies long before their initial light reached our eyes. If all light had been created at the creation of the earth, it would be mathematically impossible to observe light we see from bodies at immense, but reliably calculated distances. Light was not created with the organization of the earth, but called into a relationship or union with the earth.

It should be carefully emphasized that in so commenting, Pratt was in no way attempting to discredit the scriptural account of creation. He was attempting to correct the erroneous use of the scriptural story in support of a philosophic concept he considered to be wholly unsound and false.

1Ibid., p. 4.
Eternal Nature of Substance.--It is quite probable that Pratt's ideas regarding the eternal nature of both physical and spiritual substance were not entirely his own. In 1844 the Prophet Joseph Smith, with whose works and writings Pratt must have been extremely familiar, made a statement that could well have aroused Pratt's curiosity. The Prophet remarked, in an address known as the King Follett Discourse:

"But if I am right I might with boldness proclaim from the house tops, that God never did have power to create the spirit of man at all. God himself could not create himself; intelligence existed upon a self-existent principle, it is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it."¹ It is clear that Orson Pratt labored conscientiously to develop ideas by his own astute reasoning processes although the suggestions for many of his concepts may have come from thinkers of the Prophet's stature as well as from doctrine obtained through ancient scriptures and modern revelations. It may have been just such outside stimulation as the Prophet's statement, however, that was responsible for Pratt's penetration of the problem of causation. The parallels between Pratt's ideas and the doctrine of the Church will be discussed at length in Chapter V.

Pratt found it essential to consider his further speculations in the light of his theory of materialism. His causation theory was required to correspond firmly with his previous

¹Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, p. 615.
theories. He appears to have accomplished this feat with remarkable adroitness. Consistency required a monistic rather than dualistic theory of causation since he had equated all forms of matter—at least in their most elementary states. The ultimate particles of both spiritual and physical matter must be identical. He must find it logically possible to evolve such widely diversified and unidentical products as animals, vegetables, and minerals out of a single kind of raw material.

It can scarcely be doubted that Orson Pratt intended to make himself unmistakably clear on the point of the eternal nature of all substance. His materialistic reasoning led him unavoidably to this conclusion. The utilized and the void portions of space were both fixed quantities. A change from this balance was, for him, unthinkable.

Therefore, the occupied and unoccupied portions of space have been constantly the same from all eternity, and they must remain the same to all eternity—there can be no increase or diminutions of either. Bodies can be increased in their exterior dimensions by increasing their interior pores, or they can be decreased by decreasing their pores; but in either of these operations, the absolute space, occupied by the particles remains unchangeably the same.

Pratt did not contend that all substances have always existed in the forms in which we find them. Nor did he go so far as to say that all matter existed in strata or types of substances. His ideas on materialism simply led him to believe that matter existed eternally—ultimate particles of matter of which all things consist. The numerous organizations of things

\[1\text{G.E.C., p. 5.}\]
which man has witnessed and in which he has participated have, in every case, been organizations of previously existing elements into new and varied forms. To this there is no exception.

He recognized the prior existence of other celestial bodies—of planets, stars, galaxies—to that of our own planet. He therefore carried his analogy on to say that if all things on the earth were and are created from previously existing materials, the earth itself may have been created after the same pattern. Whether virgin matter or particles of other worlds were used he did not claim to know. It was his opinion, however, that evidence pointed to the probability that portions of previously well developed worlds were used in the organization of the earth. At any rate the analogy was, to him, sufficiently reasonable to be carried on to pertain to all heavenly bodies and all things.

Primary and Secondary Forces.—Pratt observed that a force, independent of any thing, is inconceivable to our minds. A force must in some way be associated with something—it must be a force of something. The thing with which a force is associated is material if it occupies space. A state of absolute rest, he continued, is unknown in all man's experience. All matter is constantly changing in some manner, and must there-

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1 Ibid. The Prophet Joseph Smith reputedly made the following statement on January 5, 1841: "This earth was organized or formed out of other planets which were broken up and remodeled and made into the one on which we live." Cited in Richards and Little, Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel; (Salt Lake City: Geo. Q. Cannon & Sons Co.; 1898), p. 287.
fore be under the influence of a force. Since all matter now exhibits change, it is conceivable that matter always did change in some degree. If matter is eternal, then the force which is associated with it is also eternal. The other view suggested by Pratt is that, since force can be observed to exist now, it must have existed co-eternally with matter because inert matter—if such ever existed—would be incapable of creating force.

"When I speak of the term Forces," he explained, "I do not mean those secondary causes which, by many, are frequently called forces; but I mean those original qualities of matter by which it changes its own state or condition."¹ The movement of matter by other matter is what he seems to have meant by secondary causes. He disclaimed these as primary forces, but called them either direct or indirect effects of forces. Force would be an effect if it had been created. Like matter, however, force cannot be demonstrated to have been created through necessity, experiment, reason, analogy, or revelation. Pratt was convinced that nearly everyone would admit the eternal existence of at least one force—Deity. He therefore found it conceivable that all forces may have existed eternally quite as easily as one.² He transformed the possibility into a strong probability by use of the reasoning previously described.

¹Ibid., p. 7.
²Ibid., p. 8. Pratt described, at great length, what the condition of matter would be if it were independent of its powers and forces. It is presumed that this was to demonstrate
Attraction and Inertia.—Orson Pratt did not hesitate to attack the scientists of his day regarding two of their favorite theories. He found both theories cumbersome and incompatible with his own. Science's theories of attraction and inertia, he insisted, are not only contrary to each other, but unfounded in experience. He established this point of disagreement with Newton in spite of having been an ardent student and admirer of the great physicist. Pratt found it entirely inconsistent that both inertia and attraction should be properties of matter. The capacity of an atom to attract atoms toward itself, thus creating motion in a body other than itself, is requisite of considerably more activity than had an atom the capacity to move itself. Either process would require activity of some sort. Activity, Pratt felt, was directly opposed to inertia in the very most real sense. "But, we ask, how can one mass of matter attract another and yet be inert? Is not attraction only another name for action? And if a body can move something at a distance toward itself, it must be more highly active than if it merely moved itself."¹ It appeared to him that the power to originate and accelerate the motion of a foreign particle is completely incompatible to the property of inertia in any particle of matter. The simultaneous presence of both properties would negate each other.

¹Ibid.
Inertia was found to be the less experientially demonstrable of the two properties. It was Pratt's opinion that if any inert substance did exist, it had not yet been discovered. All matter appears to be active. He did not, however, close the door on the possibility that some inert particles may be found in the future. Such a substance would have to have been set in motion by active matter bumping up against it and pushing it into contact with still other active matter. It would eventually have become the core of a shell of active matter so that it is unrecognizable as inert matter. He emphasized that if such an example did exist, he could find neither logical necessity nor use for that existence.¹

Pratt doubted the tenability of attraction as a property of atoms. He could not reconcile himself to the belief that if forces are qualities of substances, they can act where the substance to which they pertain is not present. It would be no more difficult for a substance to exist where it was not, than to act where it was not, Pratt asserted. It was unthinkable that a particle should be able to exert activating force on every other particle but not on itself. The idea that particles could repel each other was equally impossible. Repulsion, like attraction, requires activity at a distance from the forceful substance.

Self-moving Particles.—Pratt's reasoning led him to formulate a theory involving pressure in contrast to the at-

¹Ibid., pp. 8-9.
tracting theory. The cohesive tendencies of atoms are not the result of one atom's attraction of another--thus causing the attracted atom to move toward the attracting one--but result from the movement of atoms toward each other because of self-moving forces within them. When atoms form in clusters and create particles of matter, the force that binds them is a pressure from within each. They are held firmly together in this fashion. Attraction requires atoms to be passive within themselves while at the same time creating activity in other atoms at a distance. Pratt believed this bizarre union of inertia and activity to be absurd.

Newton's and Pratt's theories are clearly opposite in principle. The latter insisted, however, that all explanatory adequacy claimed for Sir Isaac Newton's theory can be claimed for his own though based on principles infinitely more simple. "All the grand central forces of the universe, by which worlds and systems of worlds, are so firmly bound together, and by which their stability is so wisely maintained--can be resolved into the self-moving forces of atoms."¹ He also asserted that all cohesive, chemical, magnetic, and electrical forces find compatibility with the atomic self-movement theory. He did not further explain the suggestion, however.

Pratt based his theory primarily on the belief that it is unreasonable to assume a substance can move another substance while yet unpossessed of the power to move itself. He

¹M.S., Vol. 6, p. 175.
was aware that tradition considered it absurd to attribute self-moving properties to matter of any kind. Yet he felt the attracting theory to be far more illogical. "Every person, with the least reflection, will admit that a substance can more easily move itself than it can move anything else," he argued. It was, for him, purely a matter of simplification. The attracting theory was too complex and demanded too many concessions of reason to be convincing.

Pratt's theory is reminiscent of Leibniz' monads. It requires an atom to act only where it is located and deprives it of the power to act at a distance. Atoms can move themselves, but can move no other thing except by indirect force. The attracting theory describes atoms as the centers of great pulling forces which extend in every direction. They are required to act at infinitely great distances from themselves when theoretically extended. Pratt's theory describes atoms as the centers of self-moving forces which, in no instance, are required to act beyond their own surfaces. The former theory requires atoms to act everywhere except where they are located, act only as they are acted upon, and to move a universe of worlds. Pratt's theory permits atoms to act only where they are located, change their states regarding rest, motion and direction, and be responsible for moving only themselves.2 It certainly cannot be maintained that Pratt's theory

1G.F.C., p. 9.
2Ibid., pp. 9-10.
was simply a cautious adaptation of other theories, whatever
his critics may say.

Intelligence.—The implications of Orson Pratt's theory
of self-moving particles are indeed vast. Atoms move them-
selves toward other atoms. What will they do so? By what
consciousness or other impetus do they thus direct themselves?
Pratt answered the question by attributing to atoms a quality
he called "intelligence."

Unintelligent matter, said Pratt, is incapable of either
understanding or obeying laws of any kind. It would have to
be acted upon by other matter possessing the quality of intel-
ligence in order to act in accordance with such laws. An in-
telligent cause would be powerless to force unintelligent matter
to act in accordance with law without bringing intelligent
matter into contact with it.\(^1\) All matter with which man has
had experience has been observed to be in a constant state of
obedience to certain laws. It is either acting by virtue of
self-moving or intelligent forces, or it is being acted upon
by matter which is intelligent and self-moving. If matter is
not self-moving it can only be considered inert matter, and
Pratt did not believe such exists. Pratt thought it futile for
an intelligent cause to give laws to unintelligent matter in-
capable of either understanding or obedience. To what possible
use could unintelligent matter be put?

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 10.
Pratt described the possibility of an organization of intelligent particles with self-moving, conscious, and intelligent properties becoming a directing force over unorganized atoms of the same kind of matter. This would establish an intelligent cause to prescribe laws for the action of less developed intelligent matter capable of understanding and obeying those laws. He expressed amazement regarding the depth of intelligence required to order the undeviating obedience which is observable in the relationship between matter and the apparent laws of nature. The flawless obedience of matter to natural law was, to him, evidence of a high degree of intelligence and agreement among all things subject to law.¹

The foregoing theory possibly led Pratt to his consideration of primary and secondary powers of atoms. The primary powers, he concluded, are synonymous with primary forces or intelligence inherent in every particle. Secondary powers are more mechanical and are demonstrable in the obedience of atoms to laws agreed upon by virtue of the primary powers of all particles. Primary power attributed to unintelligent matter, on the other hand, was inconceivable to him. Secondary power—mechanical obedience—could only be accomplished in behalf of unintelligent particles by the exercise of primary powers of intelligent particles. Of their own volition—which in itself is a contradiction in terms—unintelligent matter "can neither approach to, recede from, nor combine with each other, Ifid.
nor obey any other prescribed law. Unintelligent particles, then, is only another name for inert particles. Pratt re-emphasized that we have no evidence of the existence of inert matter.

Eternality of Intelligence.——The possibility arises that intelligence was the result of the organization of inert or unintelligent matter. This theory suggests that particles of a material body suddenly generated energy from within upon reaching an arbitrary degree of development. If not this, then they were energized from without sufficiently to create a consciousness or power of intelligence. Pratt, however, wanted to know how these combinations occurred. What power brought precisely the proper atoms into contact with each other so as to fulfill the necessary requirements? It was highly improbable that the naturalist's theory of happenstance was sufficiently explanatory. The only other possibility might be that some anterior power had so directed the procedure. How, then, did sufficient intelligence become extant to create such a directing power? Pratt believed that intelligence itself was the anterior force. Intelligence, like force, must be associated with something. If that something occupies space, intelligence is then a quality of matter. It must, therefore, have existed eternally with the matter to which it pertains, for it is judged to be antecedent to all other powers of matter and could not have been created.

1Ibid., p. 11.
Sir Isaac Newton, Clarke, Stewart, Herschel, and other noted British philosophers and theologians had, said Pratt, committed themselves to the belief that the substance of Deity is both omnipresent and eternal. It is unlikely that Christian thinkers would deny that the particles of which Deity consists—whether or not they admit them to be material—are endowed with powers of intelligence of the highest possible order. Pratt viewed this to be an admission that at least some substance eternally possessed intelligence. He extended the analogy to say that intelligence is as eternal as all substance to which it pertains. The universal was no less conceivable.

Again, if the acquisition of intelligence did not occur by chance as the naturalists believe, it must have been by the will of some other intelligent atom or being. If this theory is correct, it must still be explained how that atom or being came into possession of intelligence. The traditional position dictates that the only being capable of imparting intelligence is Deity. There remain only two ways—excluding the naturalist approach—in which Deity could have come into possession of intelligence. Either it was eternally a part of the substance of Deity, or it was acquired by experience. But Pratt points out that to assume the latter method is to say that Deity was acted upon by some outside influence. That external substance must have been unintelligent unless the prior existence of some intelligence to that of Deity be admitted. Pratt found it inconceivable that unintelligent matter could have
acted upon the substance of Deity—or any other substance—and produced intelligence. The intelligence of Deity must, therefore, be as eternal as the particles of the substance to which it pertains. Analogy indicates that if the intelligence of one being or atom is eternal, the intelligence of all atoms or beings may likewise be eternal.\(^1\) Pratt framed it in these words:

We do not consider it possible for the Almighty (though we speak with all due deference to his Superior and Transcendent Powers) to create an intelligent power, or to impart it to materials where it does not already exist. On the other hand, matter once possessed of an intelligent capacity must have always possessed this property, and must forever continue to retain it. As there is no being, as we conceive, able to originate this power, so there is none, as we also conceive, able to annihilate it. Hence the amount of matter possessing capacities for intelligence in the universe, be it great or small, is constant and can never be increased or diminished in the least degree.\(^2\)

It will be noted that there exists, in the above quotation, apparent genuine agreement between Pratt's conclusion and the remarks of the Prophet Joseph Smith quoted earlier in the chapter. Nor can either man, by virtue of word or deed throughout his life, be justly accused of attempting to malign the majesty and power of the Eternal God. This subject will be further considered in following chapters.

Magnitude and Figure of Particles.--It is quite natural that Pratt should be drawn into speculation concerning their characteristics of size and shape having concluded that intel-

\(^1\)M.S., Vol. 6, pp. 157-159.

\(^2\)G.F.C., p. 11.
ligent, self-moving particles of matter are eternal. The ques-
tion arose as to whether the atoms always existed in the state
in which we now believe them to be. No phenomenal basis for
information was, nor is yet available to substantiate empirical
knowledge about atoms. The general feeling is that the one
outstandingly common characteristic of all atoms is their in-
finiteness of dimension to be an indication favoring the theory
that atoms were manufactured—in mass produced by a supreme intel-
ligence. The Mormon philosopher himself expressed his inclina-
tion to believe that eternally existing atoms in all probabil-
ity would be found to exist in all varieties of size and shape
if unaffected by any force which might tend to change their
state. Atoms would exist in all sizes from infinitely small
to infinitely large if acted upon by no force whatsoever. He
was forced to agree that the apparent uniformity of atoms was
an indication of so called "manufacturing." The area of agree-
ment, however, proved most superficial.

The English philosophers placed themselves in an awk-
ward position by maintaining that the uniformity of atoms
indicated their manufacture. The uniformity of the substance
of Deity in its omnipresent state must either be denied or

\[1\] Ibid., p. 13. According to Pratt these men and others of the day considered this point to be strong evidence against any possibility of self-existing matter from a teleological viewpoint.
admitted to be subject to the requirement of having been manufactured. Pratt, however, was untroubled by any such dilemma. His logical conclusion was that the manufacturing forces which may have graded the atoms into their state of theoretical uniformity, were not external but internal or self-moving and intelligent forces. Why uniformity? The inconceivable smallness of atoms seemed to Pratt to be indispensable to the functions of nature. He used the examples of the processes of light rays, vision, temperature change, etc., to illustrate this economy. Atoms have intelligence and power sufficient to move themselves toward, adhere to, and form particles with other atoms. These same internal powers could be turned to dividing and sub-dividing unfavorably large particles. The economy of nature could thus be better served. Similarly, those particles too small could unite to improve their utility. A manufacturing process would indeed occur, but through the self-moving forces and self-will of the atoms rather than from external forces. The particles which compose the substance of Deity could act identically to those of all other substances. This process of self-gradation may have been going on for countless ages in order to produce the uniformity we now believe exists. The genius of this process, however, does not lie in the creation of atoms—for Deity could not create itself—but in the inherent power of the atoms of all matter.¹

¹Tbid., pp. 13-14.
Pratt denied that the intelligence of all atoms had always been at its optimum in spite of its eternality. Nor did he maintain that the intelligence of all atoms is equal. The process of self-gradation described in the preceding paragraph indicates that constant activity among the atoms was and is endlessly occurring. It is probable that an infinite gradation of intelligence exists among an infinite number of particles. When "intelligence" is used synonymously with "wisdom," "understanding," "aptitude," or their equivalents, it may be the case that no intelligence exists at all in particular atoms. The capacity for intelligence would be as eternal a quality of those particular atoms as of any others in such a case, however.  

Pratt thought it unlikely that the various atoms possessed the same degree of intelligence ages ago as they have now. Neither, he supposed, was it the case that the same laws always governed the activity of self-moving particles. The laws pertaining to their operations were probably few. The atoms unable to comprehend higher laws must necessarily have operated by laws of a less complicated nature. More complex and beneficial laws were instituted by the most advanced intelligence of all as the abilities of the individual atoms increased. Pratt denied that, even after eons of time, the atoms have advanced to the fullest extent of their capabilities—nor can they ever. He believed them to be in an eternally advanc- 

1Ibid., p. 14.
ing continuum. "Thus as endless ages shall open new glories, and new laws, and new modes of action, they will progress in the grand, universal, and eternal scale of being."¹

The relatively inexperienced atoms would be qualified to go on to higher and more extensive knowledge having once learned the fundamental lessons of motion, cohesion, equilibrium and the like. They would begin to adhere to others of their kind in vast numbers. Particles, then bodies of various sizes and shapes would be formed. The differences in these particles and bodies would then not be the result of differences in basic substance, but differences in form and figure, size, hardness, and so on. In this manner elements, spirit, light, or any other of the infinite variety of matter with which we commonly have to do might be formed. All these varieties would have been the results of the combinations of a single kind of self-moving, intelligent ultimate substance. Pratt maintained that if the scientific processes of decomposition were sufficiently mastered to permit intricate breakdowns, we would find that "all the ponderable substances of nature, together with light, heat, and electricity, and even spirit itself, all originated from one elementary simple substance, possessing a living self-moving force, with intelligence sufficient to govern it in all its infinitude of combinations and operations, producing all the immense variety of

¹Ibid.
phenomena constantly taking place throughout the wide domains of universal nature."

Pratt believed the portion of this single, ultimate substance which is in possession of the greatest amount of knowledge to be the law-maker and overseer of all other such substance. Those particles now compose the substance of the all-wise, all-powerful organizer of universes because of their diligence in the learning process and greater utilization of wisdom acquired. All organizations of things of every variety are the result of these eternal forces of self-moving, intelligent and everlasting particles of substance. Orson Pratt believed these forces to be the "Great First Causes of all things and events that have had a beginning."2

1Ibid., p. 15.
2Ibid., p. 16.
CHAPTER IV

SOME THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PRATT'S PHILOSOPHY

Knowledge and Truth.--Orson Pratt was motivated by the conviction that study of the things around us is inseparably connected with theology. All his academic work was permeated by sincerity born of this belief. It was apparently for this reason that his ambit of philosophic speculation was largely restricted to theories of a theological cast. He seems to have felt that development of thought in these areas was highly contributive to an understanding of the nature of both God and man. He earnestly sought knowledge of all things, but never forgot his conviction that God Himself is that being who dispenses all knowledge:

The study of science is the study of something eternal. If we study astronomy, we study the works of God. If we study chemistry, geology, optics, or any other branch of science, every new truth we come to the understanding of is eternal; it is a part of the great system of universal truth. It is truth that exists throughout universal nature; and God is the dispenser of all truth--scientific, religious, and political.1

Truth, then, was the object of Pratt's search. He defined it as "The relation which things bear to each other," and described it as being independent of all ideas. Truth need

not be perceived or known in order to exist. "Knowledge is
the perception of truth."¹ Pratt believed that God perceived
all truth and became the dispenser of all knowledge by offer-
ing what truths He wished to the perception and understanding
of man. It is not likely that Pratt argued in favor of the
theory that God is directly responsible for the dissemination
of each of the countless minor truths men perceive every day,
but rather that God designated categories of perception from
which man may gain knowledge. God may reserve other truths
for His own use exclusively. Neither is it likely that Pratt
would have denied that new truths are continually coming into
existence. New truths come into existence whenever relations-
ships of things change or are created, according to his defini-
tion of truth. Truth, as a universal, would then be as eternal
as the existence of things which could be related. God is not
the author, but the supreme perceiver of truth, then. God
could be considered the author of certain specific truths in-
asmuch as relationships of existing things are constantly
changed—organized or dispersed—by His handiwork.

Pratt believed that God is assisted in His dissemina-
tion of truth by the Holy Ghost, "...which is the Spirit of
revelation, which, when we properly train our minds according
to the law of God, can open to us the hidden mysteries of the
works of God—the mysteries of astronomy, chemistry, geology,
and ten thousand mysteries which never could be unfolded by

¹A.l., p. 1.
the natural reasoning of man."¹ Those peoples having the advantage of the revelations of the Holy Ghost are indeed in an enviable position to gain knowledge, Pratt suggested. They have access to the same books and commonly accepted methods of searching out knowledge as well as the revelations of Deity.

The ideal facility for learning, said Pratt—and apparently this was his endeavor—is to combine the products of revelation and the reflecting ability of a well-trained, scientifically developed mind directed in the proper channel. His advice to the people was that they energetically train their minds both religiously and scientifically in order to accumulate the greatest stores of knowledge. His own works seem to demonstrate this same combination, for he appears to have used the revelations pertaining to the nature of Deity as the basis for his theoretical structures regarding materialism and causation. Materialism seems to have been his prior consideration, while his speculations of causation developed from this materialistic point of view.

Deity.—There is little possibility, as has been pointed out, that Pratt's conception of Deity was the outgrowth of his materialistic philosophy. He certainly made no such contention himself. It is much more probable that he initiated his speculation regarding materialism and causation because of his concept of God. The publication of the Kingdom of God tracts in 1848 brought the furor of indictment with which he was

bombarded by the British theologians. It was the descriptions of Deity contained in the tracts that seemed to irritate the learned gentlemen.

The obvious fact is that Pratt acquired his concept of the nature of Deity long before writing or publishing a word in England. This basic concept was nothing of his own invention. It was the orthodox doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This doctrine was one object of Pratt's declaration of faith and assent when he entered the waters of baptism as a youth of nineteen years. The conviction was doubtlessly strengthened through association with Joseph Smith who probably neglected few opportunities to affirm the doctrine so personal to him by reason of his own experience.

Sufficient evidence has already been given to affirm that Pratt believed the Father and Son to be material personages of separate and distinct identity. They have the most real relationships with both time and space.

The true God exists both in time and in space, and has as much relation to them as man or any other being. He has extension, and form, and dimensions, as well as man. He occupies space; has a body, parts, and passions; can go from place to place--can eat, drink, and talk, as well as man. Man resembles him in the features and form of his body, and he does not differ materially in size.1

The Father and the Son are identical, Pratt maintained—not in substance, but in form and likeness. One is the virtual offspring of the other and is in the express image of His person as the scriptures avow. No atom of their substances can simul-

1K.G., Part I, p. 4.
taneously occupy any portion of space with any other particle of matter, nor can any particle of their substances occupy more than one portion of space at any identical moment. They possess material bodies of flesh and bone which are, as is man's, occupied by material bodies of spirit.

This description of Deity was alarmingly impious in the eyes of those who supported Christianity's traditional trinitarian concepts. Taylder said the doctrine is derogatory to God for it makes Him finite, denies to Him the quality of omnipresence, and compares Him to man. Pratt's counter attack left nothing to be imagined as to who, in his opinion, was guilty of impiety. The world contains two kinds of atheists, he maintained,

One class denies the existence of God in the most positive language: the other denies his existence in duration or space. One says, "There is not God;" the other says, "God is not here or there, any more than he exists now and then." The infidel says, God does not exist anywhere. The Immaterialist says, "He exists nowhere."

It was the supreme insult for man to deprive God of the basic attributes of the most elementary particles of matter, Pratt thought. To give God no relationship whatsoever with space and time—that is, no location and no moment of existence—was to make of Him the precise definition of non-existence. The creeds of Christianity rendered God powerless to defend Himself against His enemies by taking away the property of extension. They rendered Him unworthy of either

1 K.G., Part I, p. 3.
respect or fear by taking away his passions so that He could not be pleased or angered. In short, Orson Pratt accused modern Christianity of having denied the true God in favor of a symbolic idol of nothingness—less worthy to be worshiped than the sun, moon, frightful serpents, images of wood and stone, and all the other absurdities men have embraced as Deities through the centuries. There can be little wonder that the theologians ignited when their modern Christianity was defined by Pratt as but "a pious name for Atheism!"  

The relationship Pratt established between God and materialism was uncomplex. God is material throughout like every other existential object and being. The scriptural depiction of God as a spirit did not interfere with Pratt's definition. Spiritual substance is equally material as any other. The more serious implications arise from the theory of causation. 

There appears to be an attitude of reluctance, on Pratt's part, to admit that Deity—after the fashion of all other material and spiritual things—was a result of the forces defined as the Great First Cause. Pratt characterized all things and events "that have had a beginning" as resulting from the eternal, self-moving, intelligent particles that he believed to be the first cause.  

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1 K.G., Part I, p. 3.
2 G.F.C., p. 16.
of Deity need not be numbered with those things thus caused.

One of the statements for which this thinker was most severely criticized was to the effect that all organizations of worlds, animals, men, spiritual personages—including the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—were, "if organized at all," the results of the unions of pre-existent, intelligent, self-moving particles.\(^1\) Pratt doubtless acknowledged all principle personages of Deity to be in a state of superior organization. It may not, however, be an entirely justifiable conclusion that Pratt intended to say all Deity went through a process of organization. That is to say, he may have wished to reserve the possibility that one or more personages—the greatest ones—were in a state of superior organization from eternity. They may never have been subject to organization at all.

Pratt cited Archdeacon Paley's revival of the teleological argument that all things exhibiting design indicate the existence of an anterior designer.\(^2\) The argument unfortunately includes all Deity if carried to its logical extreme, for Paley would surely admit that the personages of Deity exhibit intense and highly developed design. Where, then, is the anterior designer of Deity? Pratt overcame Paley's problem by naming the self-moving, intelligent atoms as the designers of Deity. Either we are compelled to admit that Deity exhibits no marks of design whatsoever, he said, or we admit

\(^1\)Ibid.
\(^2\)Ibid.
that the substance of which God now consists organized itself. In either case—and Pratt did not here specifically designate his choice—whether the personage of God be eternal or not, "His substance, with all its infinite capacities of wisdom, knowledge, goodness, and power, must have been eternal." ¹ God's substance is the most highly advanced of all substances whether organized as a personage or not. He creates the laws for the operations of all other intelligent substances and guides them through the stages of their development.

Pratt simply stated, with regard to the person of the Son, that all statements he had made regarding the person of the Father were equally applicable to His Son, Jesus Christ. But their persons are distinctly separate, and their Father-Son relationship is literal.

_The Holy Ghost._—Perhaps the most controversial of all ideas advanced by Orson Pratt were those concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. He acknowledged the Holy Ghost as the third member of the Godhead. He also said that the Holy Spirit is as wholly material as are the first two members of the Trinity. It is similar in many respects but differs widely in others. It nonetheless possesses precisely the same attributes of knowledge, power, etc., as do its companions. God the Father and the Son, being personages of both spirit and body, cannot each be in more than one portion of space at one time. They cannot be everywhere present in person. The Holy

¹Ibid.
Spirit, however, is not so restricted. It exists in vast, immeasurable quantities in connection with all material worlds and extends through all space intermingling with all other particles of matter whether they are organized or not. "All the innumerable phenomena of universal nature are produced in their origin by the actual presence of this intelligent, all-wise, and all-powerful material substance called the Holy Spirit."¹

The activities of this Spirit, Pratt explained, are what we know as the laws of nature. It is the unified, animating, controlling force diffused throughout the universe working in correlation with the Father and Son.

It is this same Spirit that acts in connexion with the Father and Son in governing all things in the heavens and upon the earth, and through all the boundless extent of space. Cause this oneness, this union among the particles of the Spirit, to cease, and you would soon see all things go into confusion. Take away this Spirit, and you would immediately see some things going up, others down; some moving horizontally; one portion of the earth would divide from the other; one part would be flying here and another there. Unless there was a oneness existing in the innumerable atoms of this universal Spirit, matter would cease to move by law; but they all act in concert, and hence there is no confusion in the operations of nature or of nature's laws.²

Pratt did not seem to be able to decide as to whether there was a personage known as the Holy Ghost or not. He

¹Ibid., p. 5.
claimed to know of no revelation clarifying the question al-
though he saw indications which led him in both directions:

I am inclined to think, from some things in the revela-
tions, that there is such a being as a personal Holy Ghost, 
but it is not set forth as a positive fact, and the Lord 
has never given me any revelation upon the subject, and 
consequently I cannot fully make up my mind one way or 
the other.

I know there are indications that such is the fact; 
for instance, where the personal pronoun is applied to the 
Spirit, as "He shall lead and guide you into all truth;" 
"he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall 
hear, that shall he speak;" and "he shall take of the 
things of the Father, and show them unto you."

From these and many other passages of the same kind 
and bearing, we may draw the conclusion that the Holy 
Spirit is actually a person. Then, again, there are other 
revelations where the pronoun "it" is applied, such for 
instance as, "The Spirit itself maketh intercession with 
groanings that cannot be uttered." And many other revela-
tions convey the idea that the Spirit is a diffused sub-
stance.

This appears to be one of the subjects about which 
Orson Pratt changed his mind in later years. He was soundly 
criticized by those in authority over him as will be pointed 
out further on. He later admitted that he may not have under-
stood this and some other doctrines as well as he once believed. 
It was, at any rate, against this concept concerning the nature

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1 It is difficult to understand Pratt's position here. 
His remarks claiming to know of no revelation clarifying the 
subject were given in a discourse Feb. 18, 1855. Section 130 
of the Doctrine and Covenants was given by revelation to Joseph 
Smith April 2, 1843, and clearly states that "The Father has a 
body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; 
but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a 
personage of Spirit." It is of course conceivable--though un-
likely--that Pratt lacked familiarity with this revelation.

of the Holy Ghost that Brigham Young spoke out most vigorously.¹ Church theologians later recognized a distinction between the term Holy Ghost and the many terms often used synonymously with it, i.e., Spirit, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Spirit of God, etc. They also pointed out that confusion has resulted from the use of the name Holy Ghost when various functions, powers, or the authority of the Holy Ghost has been the intended meaning.² Pratt might have had less difficulty with the question had these distinctions been more clearly made in his day.

Man.--Pratt would have us speculate that man is the designed product of self-moving, intelligent atoms whose willful combinations--under the direction of Deity--created substance of a certain potentiality. This substance, through thousands of ages of experiences and refinement, became suitable to be organized into a spiritual body. The spiritual body developed all the attributes of individuality and personality so that it became unlike any other spirit that ever has or ever will exist. The various parts of the spiritual body

¹Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 267. Brigham Young: "According to his (Pratt's) philosophy, the devils in hell are composed of and filled with the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, and possess all the knowledge, wisdom, and power of the Gods. If he believes his own doctrine pertaining to the celestial and other kingdoms, viz., that the devils in hell possess the same power as the Gods, they being opposed to Jesus and his Father, the whole fabric must fall. When I read some of the writings of such philosophers, they make me think, 'Oh dear, granny, what a long tall our puss has got!'"

²See James E. Talmage, Articles of Faith, pp. 159-162. Also, Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine, pp. 66-68.
act, feel, and are cognitive in perfect harmony so as to be identified as a self.

The substance of which spiritual man is composed went on in higher orders of development having divided, at some point, from matter once similar to itself. Other matter continued on to become elements of physical substance. Pratt theorized that it may have been to facilitate re-familiarity with these coarser varieties of substance that spirits were given physical bodies.\(^1\) He implied that lessons in the laws pertaining to the use of physical substance were necessary in man's progression.\(^2\) The physical body is thus described as the medium by which the spirit comes into contact with and into possession of understanding of the physical elements and their operations. The sensory parts of the body are described by Pratt as being "inlets of knowledge" to the spirit. The spirit, however, is the real knower, thinker, seer, feeler—the real self. These "inlets" are greatly restrictive in the amounts of information they transmit to the spirit. Our know-


\(^2\)Ibid. As though speaking to universal man, Pratt wrote: "Hast thou not been sent here (the physical world) then to receive an experimental education,—to become acquainted with the existence, properties, laws, and operations of other varieties of matter; and by these means to be enabled to combine, organize, and control the same for thine own pleasure, benefit, convenience and happiness, and thus become qualified for the society of a more exalted and higher order of beings? Couldst thou exercise power or control over elements of which thou wast entirely ignorant? Couldst thou combine, arrange, and organize material substances of whose existence and properties thou hadst not the least idea? Couldst thou display the
knowledge from sight, for instance, is restricted by the amount of light the aperture of the eye will permit to come in contact with the spirit. This contact, Pratt suggests, is not necessarily direct. It may utilize any number of unknown media of transmission. The purpose of this and similar knowledge gained through our other organs of sense, is to gain mastery over the physical world with all its ramifications. The implication is that the information will conceivably be used by man, as has been done by more advanced beings, in the organization of physical substances into the infinite varieties with which we are now gaining experience.

Pratt did not insist that sense perception is the sole method of men's learning, however. Knowledge must come through a combined effort: "What few glimmering ideas the wisest of us get, we obtain by experience, through the medium of our senses, and the reflecting powers of the mind."¹ He thus indicated his opinion that, at least while clothed with a physical body, the spirit is principally limited to learning that which the body permits. Still, nothing at all could be learned without the reflecting power of the mind. Pratt saw a fantastic potential for learning at such time as the spirit should not be restricted by the body. He used the illustration of the telescope being employed to increase the amount of light trans-

mitted through the eye to the mind in order to see luminous bodies at millions of miles distance. He formulated the following provocative theory by continuing the analogy:

If we, by looking through these little eyes of ours, can see objects some thousands of millions of miles distant; if we can see objects that are existing at that immense distance through the medium of these little inlets; suppose that the whole spirit were uncovered and exposed to all the rays of light, can it be supposed that light would not affect the spirit if it were thus unshielded uncovered, and unclothed? Do you suppose that it would not be susceptible of any impressions made by the elements of light? The spirit is inherently capable of experiencing the sensations of light; if it were not so, we could not see.

---Then unclothe the spirit, and instead of exposing a small portion of it about the size of a pea to the action of the rays of light, the whole of it would be exposed. I think we could then see in different directions at once. 1

The illustration could as logically be carried on to demonstrate the same potentiality for all of man's numerous senses.

Pratt's writings reflect humility regarding the limitations surrounding man in his present. This does not tend to diminish Pratt's high regard for man's intellectual potential. "The amount of knowledge, which we in our present state are in possession of is extremely limited, so that when compared with that vast amount of knowledge that fills eternity, we might say that man, in his highest attainments here in this life, is, as it were, nothing." 2 From such statements it appears that

1Ibid., p. 243.
2Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 97.
Pratt, although genuinely respectful of man's progress to date, was convinced that the immeasurably greater portion of human development lies in the future. Pratt's reduction of all beings and things to a common, universal substance implies his belief that the potential capacities of all substance was equal in its most rudimentary form. Nowhere in his writings has he indicated that some ultimate particles were more intelligent than others except as intelligence was added to intelligence by obedience to laws of operation. He recognized the gradation not extant among intelligent substances, but did not deny the possibility that other substantial beings may reach the degrees of excellence attained by Deity—and with the assistance of that Deity.

It is plain from Pratt's writings that he believed implicitly in the literal Father-Son relationship of God and Christ. The same pattern held true for God and every man. All mankind is the spiritual offspring of God by whatever process that relationship may have been achieved.\(^1\) Pratt did deny, however, that God created the substance of which man is composed from non-existent matter. The implication from his causation theory is that to whatever extent God sired and/or organized the spirits of men, it was with the consent of the intelligence inherent in the material particles used in that process.\(^2\) The workmanship of the Father was the object of

\(^1\) Lundwall, loc. cit., pp. 213-223.

\(^2\) M.S., Vol. 28, pp. 721-723.
Pratt's admiration when he said, "O, Man! the noblest inhabitant of the earth! Wonderful is thy physical construction, and more wonderful still is thy mental constitution." The implication here is unmistakable. Pratt believed the physical part of man to be the design and construction of God, while the mental part he believed to be the constitution of eternally existing intelligence. Both are material. The substances of both existed from eternity in some form. It was God who governed the organization of man in its entirety.

**Sin and Punishment.**—Pratt's belief in an inexhaustible supply of ultimate atoms was indicated by his acknowledgement of the continuing process of organization of atoms and perpetual development of the particles and bodies which they eventually form. The existing scale of development from the most simple and uncomplex on one extreme to the infinitely advanced organization of Deity on the other, gives credulity to the probability that processes of development are as eternal as their material subjects. The work of perfecting is unending. Organizations of worlds and spirits and men with all their accompanying categories of existence are continually coming into being as a result of the progress of intelligent, self-moving atoms being guided through their endless activities by the wisdom and power of the highest God. Pratt's philosophy attributes intelligence to the ultimate particles. They are then responsible for their own progress in that they may choose

1M.S., Vol. 6, p. 157.
to obey or disobey the laws which govern them. A penalty is imposed when a law is disobeyed or ignored. The violator may either be halted in advancement and remain stationary until the forfeit has been discharged, or it may be reduced along the scale of being and actually lowered to a previous stage of advancement. It would theoretically be possible for a highly advanced being—through continual disobedience and rebellion—to be reduced to the most elementary beginnings from which he started eons of time past. Both Orson Pratt and Joseph Smith denied, however, that it is within the power of any being to completely destroy intelligence. Such an offender could not be consigned to non-existence.

This theory of sin and punishment provides ample basis for interesting speculation whether it is correct or not. Few penalties could be more effective than surrender of ages of diligent progress and the privileges, joys, powers and potentialities that came with it. Paradoxically, few forms of punishment could be more kind to a rebellious being than removal from a plane of existence that he could not abide, and restitution to a lesser plane where more experience may be gained in the arts of obedience and progress.

It is not illogical to believe that opposing forces have been brought to bear on all intelligence throughout most of its stages of development. This supposition takes into consideration the attribute of free-agency in intelligence, and the principle that matter can act upon matter. The genius of
progress, then, becomes the ability to recognize and obey the laws which lead to growth and advancement, simultaneously recognizing and rejecting those laws leading to retrogression. It would be suspected that, through countless ages of experience, intelligence could dependably consider the sources of various laws as indicative of their merit. Confidence in the wisdom of a supreme being whose guidance had unfailingly led to significant advancement could not conceivably be misplaced.

Official Church Criticism.--It would be an endless task to find a creative thinker with whom everyone in his own society agreed. The requirement is far too great to be expected and is probably responsible for the inactivity of many men who, but for the want of sufficient courage, might have made significant contributions in thought stimulation. A moment's reflection on Orson Pratt's position will show it to be far more precarious than most. He was a scientist, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher on the one hand--a theologian, missionary, and most important of all an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ on the other. He was most of all the Apostle, although genuinely dedicated to all these pursuits. His opinion was regarded as expert and his powers of analysis highly respected.

Orson Pratt, like most contributors of his stature, was criticized most severely from among his own people. Unlike others, however, the official criticism was without exception directed toward his concepts--never toward his ability, char-
acter, or his integrity. Perhaps there has been no more poign-
ant example of difference of opinion amid almost consuming
love and respect as is historically portrayed between Elder
Orson Pratt and President Brigham Young. These pillars of
eyearly Mormons could differ powerfully in their concepts, yet
work together tirelessly as brothers in the cause of building
up the Kingdom of God.

It should be recognized that, in whatever controversy
arose between the two, each was stimulated by sincere desire
to discharge his duties and honor his responsibilities as he
saw them to be. It was not in quest of fame or fortune that
Pratt published the works for which he was criticized. It was
because he had been challenged to further elucidate some of
the doctrines he preached during his missionary labors, as he
explained.

I have published many pamphlets and works and in most
of them, I have published the simple, plain, easy princi-
ples of the Gospel. It is true that in answering some
queries that have been put forth by the world, I have been
obliged to deviate, in some of my publications, from the
plain and simple course I have generally pursued in my
works.

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The people know we believe these doctrines, and they
publish against us on this ground, and if we should not
take up any argument to explain the matter, it would only
serve to rivet down their prejudices on their hearts.
Notwithstanding this, it was always more delightful to me
in all my preachings abroad, and in any publications I
have sent forth, to dwell upon faith, repentance, baptism
for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost
by the laying on of hands, and upon the plain, simple,
everyday duties of the Saints, showing them what to do in
order to obtain eternal life in the Kingdom of God.1

Brigham Young's attitude reflected the desire to perpetuate these same uncomplex truths of which Pratt spoke. He was burdened with heavy responsibility as the leader of a new and rapidly growing religious movement. He had seen many capable and devoted men led away from the Church by false doctrine in the early years of the organization's history and his memory of those tragedies was vivid. He realized himself to be the power responsible for preventing the people from falling into speculation which might be theologically over their heads and which could conceivably lead them from what he considered to be the doctrinal necessities. There were, on the other hand, portions of Pratt's writings and theories that President Young was simply unable to confirm. Those pertinent to this treatise were Pratt's suggestion that Deity, like all other beings, may have been the result of the self-combinations of

1 John A. Widstoe, Discourses of Brigham Young, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1925), p. 25. Brigham Young addressing a General Conference of the Church in Salt Lake City: "Many have tried to penetrate to the First Cause of all things; but it would be as easy for an ant to number the grains of sand on the earth. It is not for man, with his limited intelligence, to grasp eternity in his comprehension."—"Instead of inquiring after the origin of Gods—instead of trying to explore the depths of eternities that have been, that are, and that will be, instead of endeavoring to discover the boundaries of boundless space, let them seek to know the object of their present existence, and how to apply, in the most profitable manner for their mutual good and salvation, the intelligence they possess. Let them seek to know and thoroughly understand things within their reach, and to make themselves well acquainted with the object of their being here, by diligently seeking unto a super-power for information and by the careful study of the best books."
intelligent particles; and Pratt's theories regarding the nature of the Holy Ghost.¹

President Young's comments were to the effect that it seemed peculiar that the prophets, the writers of the scriptures, Christ Himself, and in our day, Joseph Smith had not seen fit to answer the questions of the first cause of all things. He was joined in this opinion by Heber C. Kimball and Daniel H. Wells, the remaining two members of the First Presidency of the Church as constituted at that time. Their statement was published in the Deseret News in Salt Lake City, and later reprinted in an issue of the Millennial Star published in England:

But none of these Prophets and Apostles--no, not even the Son of God himself--has ever been able, to our knowledge, to inform the world respecting the "Great First Cause," and to explain how the first organized being was originated. They never were able to reveal to man that every part of the Holy Spirit, however minute and infinitesimal, possessed "every intellectual or moral attribute possessed by the Father and the Son," or that "The spiritual personages of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, if organized at all, must have been the result of the self-combinations and unions of the pre-existent, intelligent, powerful and eternal particles of matter." The reader may inquire, "Why could they not reveal this?" It was because there was no such fact in existence. They were evidently content with the knowledge that from all eternity there had existed organized beings, in an organized form, possessing superior and controlling power to govern what brother Pratt calls the "self-moving, all-wise and all-powerful particles of matter," and that it was

¹M.S., Vol. 27, p. 658-663. In the issues of the Seer, Pratt published certain theories concerning the plurality of gods and their equality in power, knowledge and advancement. These theories have not been treated in this thesis because of the magnitude of the subjects involved. Suffice it to say that Brigham Young referred to them and said, simply, "it is not true."
neither rational nor consistent with the revelations of God and with reason and philosophy, to believe that these latter forces and powers had existed prior to the Beings who controlled and governed them."

Having been called to task by the First Presidency, Pratt wished it known that his publications were in no way intentionally misleading. "So far as I have ever preached abroad in the world, and published, one thing is certain, I have not published anything but what I verily believed to be true. . . . I may have erred, for to err is human." 2

The principal point of contention between Orson Pratt and Brigham Young was apparently the fact that Pratt had published speculative doctrine giving the impression that it was the official and sanctioned doctrine of the Church. President Young cautioned Pratt against the practice and extracted a promise from the philosopher that he would not publish except on the subjects of the first principles and acceptable doctrine. 3

On one occasion in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Pratt felt disposed to mention the controversy. He confessed having once had the inclination to go against the counsel of the brethren

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1Ibid. In fairness to Orson Pratt, the author wishes to point out that he found no indication in Pratt's writings that any elementary particle of matter was considered "all-wise" and "all-powerful" until after it became identified as a part of the personage of Deity. There is no indication that Pratt claimed all ultimate particles to be "all wise," etc., but only that they had the capacity for wisdom and power to be developed through experience and learning.


3Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 267.
with regard to the publication of some of his ideas. He con-
tinued to say, however, that inasmuch as he disobeyed instruc-
tions, he felt he had offended both the Lord and the brethren
and had brought darkness to his own mind. He stated, at the
same time, that his precepts had not been the products of reve-
lation from heaven, but the fruits of reason and reflection.

At the time I expressed those views, I did most sin-
cerely believe that they were in accordance with the word
of God. I did most sincerely suppose that I was justifying
the truth. But I have since learned from my brethren
that some of the doctrines I had advanced in the "Seer,"
at Washington, were incorrect. 1

This public confession was reprinted in the Deseret
News and to it the First Presidency attached the following
statement of confidence:

Elder Pratt sustains an unimpeachable character, as
far as strict morality, tried integrity, industry, energy,
zeal, faithfulness to his religion, and honesty in all
business transactions are concerned, but it will be read-
ily perceived from his remarks, that he does not claim
exemption from liability to err in judgement in relation
to some points of doctrine. Brother Pratt's preachings
and teachings upon the first principles of the Gospel are
excellent. 2

It should be mentioned that, in the controversy over
points of speculation and the publication of theory as doctrine,
neither side ever suggested that it was not the privilege of
the other to maintain his own opinion. The point at issue was
whether or not the theories should be published and dissemi-
ated under the name of the Church. It was in this regard that

1Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 374.

2M.S., Vol. 27, pp. 658-663.
Brigham Young felt moved to reprove. Pratt's public apologies portrayed genuine love and respect for leadership and the authority of the Priesthood which, he said, "...is the highest and only legitimate authority in the Church in these matters." His self-criticism was to the effect that he was slow to heed the instructions of those in positions of authority over him.

"In this thing I have sinned; and for this I am willing to make my confession to the Saints. I ought to have yielded to the views of my brethren. I ought to have said, as Jesus did to his Father on a certain occasion, 'Father, thy will be done.'"

The First Presidency used the opportunity to make clear their intention that the counsel given to brother Pratt was intended for all. The concluding lines of their official published statement read: "This should be a lasting lesson to the Elders of Israel not to undertake to teach doctrine they do not understand. If the Saints can preserve themselves in a present salvation day by day, which is easy to be taught and comprehended, it will be well with them hereafter." 

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2 Ibid.
3 M.S., Vol. 27, p. 663.
CHAPTER V

SOME DOCTRINAL ANTECEDENTS OF PRATT'S PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of this chapter is to show some relationships between Pratt's philosophy and doctrine of the Church. Many of his basic ideas were preceded by parallel doctrine with which Pratt must have been wholly familiar. Chronology and accessibility of this doctrine strongly indicate the probability that Pratt's theories were not so much the products of metaphysical speculation as extensions of his interpretation of scripture and revelation. It is apparent that Pratt expanded some of these ideas and put them into philosophical context. The roots of his theoretical ideology, however, are found to originate in writings now upheld by the Latter-day Saints as scripture, and in doctrine revealed to and expounded by Joseph Smith. This discussion will be limited to those parallels basic to Pratt's theories of materialism and causation.

Things Exist in Space.--Pratt recognized the existence of things in space to be a contingent rather than a necessary truth.¹ He perceived his own existence as well as that of

¹See Chapter III.
things external to himself. Space is not wholly occupied, he observed, because motion commonly occurs. Space is neither a boundless solid, nor an infinite expanse void of occupancy.

The revelations given to Joseph Smith expressed this same view of substantial existence almost twenty years before Pratt's writings. God is revealed to have said to Moses:

And worlds without number have I created; and I have created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I have created them, which is mine Only Begotten.

But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.

And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words. ¹

Another revelation, given in 1832, advanced the concept that space is divided into kingdoms governed by laws:

"And there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom."² Not only objects, but organizations of objects and governments or systems of control exist in innumerable quantities. In relation to these and similar scriptures Pratt does not appear to have been overly extravagant in his existential concepts.

All Things are Material.—This is undoubtedly the central theme of Pratt's philosophy. He earnestly solicited proof

¹Pearl of Great Price, Moses 1:33, 35, 38.
²Doctrine and Covenants, 88:37.
of a contrary theory. One wonders how a man of Pratt's relative obscurity could so intrepidly challenge the theological and philosophical worlds on a point so traditionally established. Spirit had been considered immaterial for centuries. Mind was equated with spirit and was therefore also believed to be immaterial.

Pratt's confidence may have been bolstered by instructions given by Joseph Smith in May, 1843. These were then and are now accepted scripture of the Church. The Prophet could not have been more specific than in stating, "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes. We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter."¹ Further explaining the concept, the Prophet said:

In tracing the thing to the foundation, and looking at it philosophically, we shall find a very material difference between the body and the spirit; the body is supposed to be organized matter, and the spirit, by many, is thought to be immaterial, without substance. With this latter statement we should beg leave to differ, and state the spirit is a substance; that it is material, but that it is more pure, elastic and refined matter than the body; that it existed before the body, can exist in the body; and will exist separate from the body, when the body will be mouldering in the dust; and will in the resurrection, be again united with it.²


²Ibid., p. 207.
Pratt's materialism clearly supports the theory that all things are composed of two types of matter—physical (body) and spiritual.¹ The doctrinal antecedents of this concept go so far as to describe two distinct processes of creation—one corresponding to each of these component types of material: "For by the power of my Spirit created I them (all created things); yes, all things both spiritual and temporal—first spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work; and again, first temporal, and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work."² The scriptures still further explain:

And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth; And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth.

What are we to understand by the four beasts, spoken of in the same verse (John 4:6)? They are figurative expressions, used by the Revelator, John, in describing heaven, the paradise of God, the happiness of man, and of beasts, and of creeping things, and of the fowls of the air; that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal; and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual; the spirit of man in the likeness of his person, as also the spirit of the beast, and every other creature which God has created.³

The spiritual creation referred to in the foregoing passages has been fundamental to the Latter-day Saints' under-

¹See Chapter II.
²D. & C., 29:31-32.
³P. of G. E., Abr. 3:5.
⁴D. & C., 77:2.
standing of the doctrine of man's pre-existence. It should be re-emphasized, so that relevance will not be lost, that both Joseph Smith and Pratt understood the spiritual substances out of which all things were first created to be wholly material. The spirit of man is no infraction of the rule. It must have existed before man could be formed in his natural state. The doctrine of the Church clearly defines man as a combination of both spirit and body.¹ The supreme example of this basic composite union was given by the pre-mortal Christ when he appeared to the Brother of Jared and said: "Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh."²

Amazement at Pratt's boldness in proclaiming concepts so unique to traditional Christianity soon vanishes in the light of the support given him from the scriptures and from revelation through the Prophet.

The Godhead.—Attention was drawn, in the previous chapter, to the observation that Pratt's concept of Deity was not the result of his theories. It was, rather, the probable impetus for them. The unique message Joseph Smith gave to the world was that he had seen the Father and Son face to face. They were in form like men. Calling him by name, They instructed

¹D. & C., 88:15.
²Book of Mormon, Ether 3:16.
him through conversation as men commonly do. The Prophet had
retired to a grove near his home on a spring morning in 1820.
His purpose was to inquire of the Lord which of the multifari-
ous sects or churches was divinely franchised. The ensuing
vision was the first modern demonstration of individual deific
identity. The Prophet recorded: "...When the light rested
upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy
all description, standing above me in the air. One of them
spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the
other--This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!"¹ Joseph Smith's
experience shattered the long-standing image created by the
Nicean Confession and rejuvenated the controversy so skillfully
tranquilized by Augustine, Aquinas, and the Scholastics.

Orson Pratt sustained the Prophet Joseph Smith and the
monumental vision from the moment of his conversion to the
Church. The Prophet's God became Pratt's God--a God of body,
parts, and passions--the God of Stephen to whom was given a
vision not unlike that of Joseph Smith's wherein the Father and
Son appeared side by side as two distinct personages.² Pratt
could no longer subscribe to the God of the Christian Philoso-
phers because Joseph Smith, Stephen, Moses,³ the Brother of

¹P. of G. P., Writings of Joseph Smith, 2:17.

²Bible, Acts 7:55. Stephen, as he suffered death by
stoning, "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory
of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

³Bible, Ex. 33:11. Moses spoke with the Lord "face to
face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Also Vs. 22-23. See
also P. of G. P., Moses 1:2.
Jared, and others had seen God and bore testimony which Pratt believed. These men experientially knew God to exist as a personage with a direct relationship to both time and space for they had seen Him in a there and then context. They had, with the possible exception of Stephen, conversed with Him as one man talks with another.

There was no need for Pratt to employ imagination in constructing his concept of the physical nature of Deity. Dependable authority provided ample information on the subject to permit the formation of his convictions. In 1843 Joseph Smith received a revelation, a part of which was dedicated to the clarification of the Biblical promise that the Father and Son would come and make their abode with those who love the Lord and keep His word. Regarding that passage, the modern revelation stated: "The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse, is a personal appearance; and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false." The same revelation explicitly stated that, "When the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man like ourselves." The physical

1 B. of M., Ether 3:6. ... And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear."

2 Bible, John 14:23.

3 D. & C., 130:3.

4 D. & C., 130:1.
characters of all members of the Godhead are described in unmistakable terms at the conclusion of the revelation: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us."  

Pratt resided in Nauvoo, as did Joseph Smith, during the period in which the pertinent revelation was given. It is reasonable to believe that the two were closely associated and that Pratt—if not previously—was then familiarized with the concepts revealed to and taught by the Prophet. Pratt never claimed to have originated the concepts he embraced regarding the identity and physical nature of the Father and the Son. He did not attempt to remodel fundamental church doctrine pertinent to the first two members of the Godhead. He did, however, propound some innovations concerning the Holy Ghost as Chapter VI indicated. The results of his departure have been pointed out as well as the possible reasons.

Joseph Smith's own ideas concerning the nature of God could have been fertile sources of Pratt's concepts:

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds things by his power, was to make himself visible,—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created

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1 D. & C., 130:22.

2 Lundwall, loc. cit., p. 13.
in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another.\(^1\)

The directness of this kind of doctrine soon established the Latter-day Saints as the foremost exponents of the anthropomorphic concept of Deity. Pratt reflected this vital conviction in all his references to the Supreme Being.

The doctrinal notion of Plurality of Gods is consistent with individual identity of the members of the Godhead. Pratt clearly understood this doctrine from the Book of Abraham's recounting of creation in the *Pearl of Great Price*. Chapters Four and Five describe creation beginning with an identification of the creators: "And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth."\(^2\) Thirty-two of the fifty-two verses in the combined chapters begin with the words "and the Gods. . ." The concept of plural Deity is thus almost tediously emphasized.\(^3\)

Joseph Smith also referred to the plurality of Deity in the King Follett Discourse in April, 1844: "In the beginning, the head God of the Gods called a council of the Gods;


\(^2\)P. of G. F., Abr. 41.

\(^3\)The Book of Abraham was translated by Joseph Smith from ancient papyrus records discovered in connection with mummies from the catacombs of Egypt. The record is considered to have been written by the hand of Abraham during his sojourn in Egypt. See *History of the Church*, Vol. 2, pp. 325, 326, 348-351.
and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people.\textsuperscript{1} Pratt, then, wrote in explication and defense of the Latter-day Saint doctrine. He became hypothetical only in speculation concerning the origin or cause of Deity.

**Eternal Nature of Things.**--Pratt's argument in support of the eternal nature of the substance of all things arose from his vehement denial that something can be created from nothing. He viewed the concept of creation ex-nihilo as utterly absurd. Such theorists became lost in infinite regression, or begged the question by concocting unmoved movers and uncaused causes.

Things are now perceived to exist and, since something can not come from nothing, something must have always existed, Pratt reasoned. He contended that the substances of all things must have always existed by the same logic. He believed that all Christian philosophers and theologians would admit that God existed eternally, and felt it justifiably conceivable that all beings and things could have existed eternally as easily as could one being.

Latter-day scriptures supported both Pratt and his contemporary theologians regarding the eternal existence of Deity: "And God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name; for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless?"\textsuperscript{2} These

\textsuperscript{1}Joseph Fielding Smith, *loc. cit.*, p. 349, citing T.S., August 15, 1844.

\textsuperscript{2}P. of G. F., Moses 1:1.
modern scriptures also paralleled Pratt in his concept that both beings and material existed prior to the commonly accepted scene of creation: "And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell."¹ A revelation given to the Church through the Prophet in 1833 fortified the concept of eternal matter by the following declaration: "For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fullness of joy."²

The Prophet's own concept of creation was partially expressed in the King Follett Discourse given in 1844.

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 "baurus," 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, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time he 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.³

The Prophet also preached the eternal nature of man:

¹P. of G. P., Abr. 3:24.
²D. & C., 93:33.
We say that God himself is a self-existent being. Who told you so? It is correct enough; but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? Man does exist upon the same principles. God made a tabernacle and put a spirit into it, and it became a living soul.  

An even earlier reference to the same principle came from Joseph Smith while addressing a group of missionaries departing for Great Britain in 1839: "The spirit of man is not a created being; it existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity."  

The references just cited should suffice to substantiate the existence of Church doctrine concerning the eternal nature of both matter and beings. All of the quoted statements are taken from writings and discourses made available to the Church prior to the time of Pratt's writings on materialism and causation. It is highly unlikely that Orson Pratt was unfamiliar with any of them. Caution is once again stressed against falsely accusing him of claiming authorship of such concepts. He never did. In all his exposition of doctrine, Pratt felt himself to be "justifying the truth."

Intelligence.--The hub around which Pratt's theory of causation revolves is the existence of self-moving particles. The power to move themselves, to will and to adhere to other particles is called intelligence. Pratt claimed these intel-

1Ibid., p. 352-353.

2Ibid., p. 158. Joseph Fielding Smith added a footnote which said in part: "In saying the spirit of man is not created the Prophet without any doubt had in mind the intelligence as explained in the Doctrines and Covenants, Sec. 93:29."
igent particles to be eternal, irreducible, and capable of expanding in knowledge gained from experience. They are governed by law and are willfully obedient. Their obedience permits them to progress and develop in organized form. Disobedience would nullify their progress, or if continued, reduce them to organized form less advanced than that in which they had once been. Pratt attributed the quality of intelligence to all ultimate particles. He did not argue that they were inherently all-knowing and all-powerful, but that they had the capacity to become highly advanced in knowledge and power. Pratt seemed to attribute personification to these intelligent particles only in the respect that all things—both objects and beings—were composed of these same basic atoms.

Doctrinal parallels of the concept of intelligence refer to what might be called embryonic man. Intelligence is the ultimate "stuff" out of which man—first spiritual, then mortal—was organized. The doctrinal implications differ from Pratt's in this regard. No scriptural suggestion is found to support the theory that all things are organizations of intelligences. Abraham recorded the following vision:

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.\(^1\)

\(^1\)P. of G. P., Abr. 3:22-3.
The Doctrine and Covenants attests the eternal nature of intelligence as that part of man which was not created: "Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be."¹ Joseph Smith revealed the same principle: "The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. That is good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits; for they are co-equal with our Father in heaven."² Again, ". . . if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal."³ The unmistakable emphasis of this passage denies that intelligence has the power to create intelligence, no matter how much greater the power of the highest than that of the least.

Attention is again drawn to the statement quoted from Joseph Smith in Chapter III of this thesis: "Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a

¹D. & C., 93:29.

²Joseph Fielding Smith, loc. cit., p. 353, citing King Follett Discourse. Elder Brigham H. Roberts added a note stating: "Undoubtedly the proper word here would be 'co-eternal,' not 'co-equal.' This illustrates the imperfection of the report made of the sermon. For surely the mind of man is not co-equal with God except in the matter of its eternity."

³P. of G. F., Abr. 3:18.
spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it."\(^1\)

Some time later B. H. Roberts wrote an interpretive comment making this observation: "'A spirit from age to age'--not 'spirit from age to age;' but 'a spirit,' that is, an entity, a person, an individual. This paragraph in the Prophet's remarks may well be taken as an interpretation of Doc. and Cov., Sec. 93:29."\(^2\) If Roberts interpreted the Prophet correctly, we are to understand that intelligence is an entity, a person, an individual--a spirit--from age to age. It was not created, nor can it be. It exists on a self-existent principle and is the basic identity around which both spirit and body are organized, made, or "created."

It will be observed that Pratt reflected this doctrinal implication whenever his theories referred to the organization of beings. He also expanded the idea to include organizations of all things--including things we commonly refer to as inanimate--as well as lower forms of life. There seems to be no doctrinal support for this extension. At least none has been observed by this author.

God--Director of Law and Order.--The concept of a supreme, guiding, law-making force in the universe is also shared by Pratt and the doctrine of the Church. Pratt described this force as a being composed of the most wise and advanced particles of matter in existence. Doctrine simply calls this all-

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 354.

\(^2\)Ibid., footnote 9.
wise, all-powerful being, God. It does not attempt to reveal His origin as an organized being—if indeed he had one at all. Pratt, on the other hand, said that if the Supreme Being was organized at all, that organization was the result of the self-moving, intelligent particles of matter which he called the great first cause of all things that have had a beginning. Pratt's reluctance to firmly state that such was actually the case has already been pointed out. The implications of his theory, however, strongly point to the probability that such an organization did take place. The personage of God would then be understood to have had a beginning although the substance of His person would still be eternal and without beginning or end.

The consistency of the two ideas lies in the identification of God as director of all that transpires. The scriptures say: "All kingdoms have a law given."\(^1\) Also: "And again, verily I say unto you, that he (God) hath given a law unto all things, by which they move in their times and their seasons; and their courses are fixed, even the courses of the heavens and the earth, which comprehend the earth and all the planets."\(^2\) These quotations are perhaps more pertinent to laws given to celestial bodies. The Doctrine and Covenants gives this comment regarding laws which govern men: "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this

\(^1\) D. & C., 88:36.

\(^2\) D. & C., 88:42-43.
world, upon which all blessings are predicated—and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."

Joseph Smith revealed his view of the doctrine in the King Follett Discourse:

The first principles of man are self-existent with God; that God himself finds himself in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was greater, and because he saw proper to institute laws, whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself, that they might have one glory upon another, in all that knowledge, power, and glory, etc., in order to save the world of spirits.

At least three salient parallels can be drawn from this statement of the Prophet's in comparison with Pratt's ideas, i.e., the principles of advancement or progression, gradation, and free will. The second is a natural and ever-present companion of the first. It is difficult to conceive of multiple entities in a state of free will self-progression with complete uniformity. The Prophet emphatically pointed up the concept that advancement is a privilege rather than the result of any predestinarian influence. The free agency privilege was extended to mortal man through his prototype in the Garden of Eden. The Book of Mormon patriarch, Lehi, also expressed the concept by way of admonition to his sons:

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life,

1D. & C., 130:21-21.


3See P. of G. P., Moses 3:17, also D. & C., 29:35.
through the great mediation of all men, or to choose cap-
tivity and death, according to the captivity and power of
the devil; for he seeks that all men might be miserable
like unto himself. 1

The principle of gradation is clearly explained in the
Pearl of Great Price account of the Lord's revelations to
Abraham: "If two things exist, and there be one above the
other, there shall be greater things above them." 2 The appli-
cation of this principle to beings places God at the zenith of
all intelligence: "And the Lord said unto me (Abraham): These
two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more
intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intel-
ligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent
than they all." 3 All intelligences, then, range in a descend-
ing echelon of infinite length with God at the apex and the
least developed, most elementary intelligence at the base.
The order of arrangement on this scale must be in an endless
state of flux due to the laws of progression.

A summary of this chapter shows that the following
ideas, basic to Orson Pratt's concepts of materialism and

1 B. of M., 2 Nephi, 2:27.


3 P. of G. P., Moses 3:19. B. H. Roberts commented:
"It is the direct statement in the Book of Abraham—accepted by
the Church as Scripture—that there are differences in the in-
telligences that exist, that some are more intelligent than
others; and that God is 'more intelligent than them all'. I
believe that this means more than that God is more intelligent
than any other one of the intelligences. It means that he is
more intelligent than all of the other intelligences combined.
His intelligence is greater than that of the mass..." Cited
causation, have paralleling and prior doctrinal counterparts: Space exists; Things exist in space; Space is not wholly occupied; All matter is eternal; All things are material; Spiritual substance is material; Deity is material; Deity governs all matter; The Godhead is composed of separate and distinct personages; Creation ex-nihilo is a false principle; Intelligence is ultimate and eternal; Gradation exists in all things; Progression is a privilege given to all intelligence; Free agency is the governing principle of progression. Many other parallels could, in all probability, be drawn.

It cannot be proved that Pratt's ideas relative to the above topics stemmed directly from Church doctrine. It is conceivable that a man could develop such theories entirely independent of any other source. Very few would attempt to defend such a possibility in Pratt's case, however. His close association with the Prophet as well as his familiarity with the standard works of the Church point strongly to the other probability. Pratt's silence regarding any claims of originality is further evidence that he reflected revelation and the scriptures.

Modern scripture has been the principle source for the citation of parallels indicated in this chapter. This is so because of the chronological proximity of these scriptures to Pratt's theories. He was, no doubt, expertly familiar with the contents of the Holy Bible which contains ample references to substantiate the same similarities. References from the
ancient scripture have been used sparingly because of the magnitude of the task involved in giving adequate coverage in a single chapter. It is hoped that someone will approach the problem from the biblical direction at some future time.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A detailed critical analysis of Orson Pratt's theories would far exceed the purposes of this thesis. It would expand the project to proportions not commensurate with the original goals. The author feels, however, that the inclusion of a few relevant comments may be appropriate. These will not reflect the scrutiny to which Pratt's theories might be put by a nuclear physicist. Major scientific criticism will be left to those specifically trained to analyze from that viewpoint. The author wishes to voice some differences with Pratt's concept of fundamental existence both from the standpoint of its conception and its monistic or pluralistic nature.

Summary.—It will be observed that Orson Pratt's major philosophic contributions were germinated by his conviction that the Church and scriptures correctly describe the personages of the Father and the Son as material beings in whose image man is created. The third member of the Godhead is equally material, although in form somewhat different from the other two. Pratt set about to theorize regarding the logical tenability of this position. His method was that of reason. He endeavored to bolster the doctrine given by revelation with rational structural support and make nil the possibility of
other than singular interpretation. His aim was not to construct a rationale to replace the authoritarianism by which the doctrine was originally given.

Pratt's materialism, summarized in its most concise terms, simply defended the universal proposition that all existent substance is material. He based his argument on the contention that an immaterial substance must have no quality or property in common with matter. All matter is related to time and space, therefore an immaterial substance must have no such relationship. If a substance exists, it must exist at some time and in some place. Therefore, an immaterial substance cannot exist. Pratt did not insist that all matter must have all qualities and properties in common. He recognized variety in properties, yet maintained that all matter has many characteristics in common with all other matter. Certain substances, then, may be vastly different from others, as for instance spiritual and physical substances. Nonetheless, both are equally material.

No stretch of imagination is required to recognize the reasons for Pratt's progression from materialism to causation. He expounded the possibility that all matter is eternal—uncreated and indestructible. This was completely contrary to all popular theories that all matter was created by Deity. He realized the necessity of including in this category even the materials out of which the personages of Deity are composed. This required him to explain by what direction the particles
of various bodies came together and formed both things and beings if not initially by God's direction. He believed, along with other rationalists, that all things exhibit evidence of design. Whereas other supporters of the teleological argument named God the great designer, Pratt felt obligated to provide a designer for Deity. Two possibilities presented themselves, viz., either the personages of Deity were eternal in their perfect forms and showed no evidence of design, or there was indeed an anterior designer.

Pratt theoretically attributed self-moving powers to the ultimate atoms of all substance. These eternal particles are possessed of intelligence by which they direct themselves toward and adhere to similar particles of matter. They move by their own will and in conjunction with natural law. Pratt called these self-moving, intelligent atoms the great first cause of all things that have had a beginning. The implication here is that if Deity can be considered to have had a beginning in personified form, intelligent atoms are the designers and self-constructors of that personification. If, however, personified Deity is considered to be eternal, the powerful, ultimate atoms were used by Deity to organize all other things and beings. This usage came about by divinely established laws which the willful atoms agreed to obey. The atoms, then, are the primary causes of all organized things, while Deity is the secondary cause. The personages of Deity, having no beginning, are then not caused although they are composed of these same
ultimate atoms. In either case, whether or not the persons of Deity are eternal, the substances of which they consist are eternal as are the substances of all other things.

Pratt would probably agree that nothing is now "created"--meaning organized--under direction other than that of God. He would probably argue that nothing has ever been created in any other way with the possible exception of one or more personages of Deity. He would, however, affirm that creation is continually taking place, and the process will be one of eternal duration since the supply of intelligent, self-moving ultimate particles is inexhaustible.

Materialism.--Little justifiable inclination is felt to differ with Pratt regarding his theories of materialism. They appear to be well founded and to correspond with doctrinal concepts of the substantial nature of all things. Pratt rendered a valuable service to his contemporaries by insisting on a clear distinction between existence and substantial existence. It appears that some metaphysicians of the day were either sloppy or deceitful in their use of the terms. To equate the expressions--as did Taylder, Brown, and Isaac Taylor--seems unjustified. Affections, or states of substances, may be said to exist, but, as Pratt argued, they cannot be said to exist in any substantial sense. Joy, love, hate, hope, fear and various other emotional entities can be considered neither objects nor beings and are obviously not material in any way. They merely reflect conditions of material things when they
are in evidence at all. They may be said to exist in this respect. Similarly, thought has no substantial existence, but that which thinks—in every observable case—is substantial. Thought is a state or condition of something which thinks, but the immaterialists of Pratt's day equated mind and thought. They added spirit to this combination and attributed the characteristics of thought to the entire group. Spirit was denied substantial existence to the same extent as was thought in this devious way. Pratt agreed that thought was immaterial, but denied that mind (or spirit) which produces thought was equally immaterial. Only mind can be said to exist in any substantial way though both may exist in some sense. Ideas exist, but they are not substances. Affections, then, cannot logically be existentially equated with those things by which they are generated. Neither can the originating substance justifiably be assigned to existential characteristics of its various states or affections, qualities or operations.

In order for the immaterialist's God to exist, he must have been produced by some substantial entity under the control of which he must forever remain or pass from existence. Pratt could not attribute such arbitrary existence to the God of the scriptures. His God was more than a verb. Pratt's indictment that the immaterialists had defined their God out of existence by denying Him temporal and spatial relationships seems justified and well established. He implied that the immaterialist's theory was precariously founded on unwillingness to recognize
the possible existence of any substance other than those which
man had to that time experienced. The existence of additional
substances has been verified by scientific discovery in numer-
ous instances since that time. The immaterialist's view was
scientifically short-sighted.

The Causal Atom.--One can scarcely withhold admiration
from Pratt for his intrepid attack on the basic principles of
the prevailing system in a time when Newtonian physics went
virtually unchallenged. He was somewhat prophetic in reject-
ing Newton's theory of attracting atoms. He pointed the way
to the swing from the great physicist although his own theory
was relatively ignored. He recognized that some sort of atomic
activity must be necessary to bring about organization of bod-
ies. Newton's theory of attraction required more than could
be expected of atoms. Pratt employed Ockham's Razor to whittle
away what he felt to be cumbersome features of Newton's theory,
i.e., that atoms would be required to act where they were not
present, and that they would be empowered to move every other
atom in the universe while lacking power to move themselves.
Pratt theorized that atoms could move themselves toward other
atoms and were not required to act where they were not present.
The self-motion theory permitted atoms to achieve exactly the
same results as the attraction theory, but was based upon prin-
ciples much less elaborate.

It should be emphasized that neither Newton, Pratt,
nor present day physicists can do other than theorize about
atoms since they were not then and are not yet observable. Pratt did not use the term exactly as it is used today. When he spoke of atoms he apparently meant the most elementary, uncomplex, and ultimate particles to which matter can be reduced -- the indivisible minimum -- whatever that might be. The modern atom is viewed as a somewhat complex organism. Pratt's theory of self-movement is as tenable as any since the atom is known only in man's imagination. It is certainly worthy of consideration.

Fundamental Existence. -- Pratt maintained that the boundlessness of space and the endlessness of duration were necessary truths because neither space nor duration could be conceived to be finite. He did not, however, believe the existence of things in space to be a necessary truth.¹ This was so because he recognized that a part of space is unoccupied, and reasoned that it would be just as easy to conceive of all space as containing nothing. It is difficult to agree with his reasoning in this regard. Even the determined solipsist is unable to eliminate himself from existence while apparently having no trouble getting rid of everything else. If Pratt could conceive at all, at least he as a conceiver must have existed in space. It would therefore be impossible to conceive all space to be empty. The solipsistic minimum is impervious. Descartes was one of the first to point this out and could be paraphrased in support of the argument: I conceive, therefore

¹See Chapter III.
I am--I exist--I occupy space. Something, then, has existed in space as long as space has been conceivable. It is as necessary as any conceivable truth.

**Monism.**—One of the major portions of Pratt's philosophy which the author feels requires re-examination, deals with the possibility that the eternal atoms of substance may have modified themselves with regard to their sizes and shapes.¹ Pratt conceived the possibility that atoms once existed in every variety of sizes and shapes, but, through their own intelligence and self-moving forces, redesigned and altered themselves to permit maximum usefulness in the processes of combination and construction. This is Pratt's explanation for the apparent uniformity of atoms. It appears, however, a most presumptuous endeavor to speak of sizes and shapes of things which have not been observed. We assume, by our own standards, that all atoms are minute in dimension. This may be true--by our own criterion. Atoms may very well exhibit an infinite variety of sizes and shapes in comparison to each other, however.

Granting, for the sake of argument, that atoms may now be in a relatively uniform state, the possibility that they once had no such uniformity points to an equally possible irregularity in properties and qualities. Pratt admitted the first lack of uniformity. If it is conceivable that any atoms existed eternally, it is just as easily conceived that these

¹See Chapter III.
atoms may have been categorized into infinite varieties. They may have differed widely in some respects while having many properties and qualities in common. This eliminates the necessity of all things and beings having been formed out of identical ultimate atoms. It is possible that the atoms which now compose the various forms of vegetation could never have been a part of animal or mineral composition. Their susceptibility may have been useful only to the organization of vegetation. Animal atoms may have been similar in many respects to mineral atoms, yet so dissimilar in others as to prevent their incorporation as portions of mineral particles. Pratt observed that all matter demonstrates activity and upon this basis he built his theory of self-movement. Be that as it may. Any vitality that atoms are thought to possess is not necessarily indicative of their possession of a quality such as intelligence. It is entirely conceivable that both intelligent and unintelligent atoms may have always existed side by side—both having power to move themselves, but only the intelligent atoms having power to design and direct. The utility of unintelligent atoms would be the same whether or not they direct themselves. They could as easily comply with design by being directed by other forces. The quality of intelligence implies cognitive ability—the ability to make choices. The mind does not balk at the recognition of these qualities in higher forms of animal life, but to attribute such ability to minerals and vegetables causes considerable distress.
Pluralism.—If it is possible that there was an eternal differentiation between intelligent and unintelligent atoms, it is also possible that there is considerable differentiation within the category of intelligent atoms. That is, some atoms may have been eternally more intelligent—thus more energetic, capable, creative, etc.—than other intelligent atoms. The order of nature denies equality and bespeaks gradation in all things. Intelligence can be observed to exert influence over objects as well as other intelligence in all case. Unification is reached when an influence exerted is strong enough to over-ride—either forcefully or by consent—all opposing influences.

We are induced to wonder if the quality of intelligence may be a distinguishing characteristic between atoms of physical substance and atoms of spiritual substance. Further, may intelligence be a quality of all spiritual atoms, or only a part of them? The regression could go on and on but would eventually lead, at least in the mind of the author, to the establishment of the following principle of identity: All things (if any) and beings which now manifest intelligence in any degree, have maintained personal identity inherent in them through all stages of development from eternity. That is to say, individuality is a co-eternal quality with intelligence. All intelligent beings, then, are their own great first causes to whatever extent they may be said to have been caused. Under the design, direction and laws of the supreme or highest intel-
intelligence, all other intelligent individuals--in an infinite range of gradation--develop and grow through conscious effort and obedience, or fail to do so through conscious lethargy and disobedience.

The author wishes to point out, without getting lost in speculation, that Pratt need not have attributed intelligence to all atoms in order to achieve the goals of his theory. The only concept thereby permitted, is the reduction of all matter to a single type of eternal atom--a common denominator. One wonders if this concept is entirely necessary to Pratt's argument. His admission that variety of dimension and figure of the eternal atoms supports the possibility of qualitative differentiation. He maintained that matter could act and be acted upon by other matter. Under the terms of his theory, then, atoms might constantly be struggling against atoms to establish their superiority so that unity could be achieved. Such a condition seems out of harmony with order. Organization would be far more simply accomplished had intelligence access to raw material with which to work. In either case, the subject is highly theoretical and no conclusions should be drawn from such unverified speculations.

Many volumes could be filled with expansions of Pratt's theories of materialism and causation. Many more books could be written formulating antitheses to and criticism of his speculation. Neither is the purpose for which this paper was intended, however, and the foregoing comments have been included
only for the sake of thought stimulation. Public affirmation or refutation of his theories will be left to those who may feel inclined to assume the responsibility.

Theory vs. Truth.—Orson Pratt's self-confessed error was that he published some of his works without clearly distinguishing theory from official Church doctrine. He submitted to public correction by proper authority for this, as was recounted in Chapter IV. He acknowledged his susceptibility to error as being equal to that of any man and admitted that those questionable doctrines he had advanced were the products of reason rather than of revelation. Within the text of the published criticism, Pratt's excellence as a propounder of the first principles of the Gospel was acclaimed by the very same authority. His integrity and faithfulness to his Church was lauded in the same breath which bore his chastisement. There is deep significance in this seeming paradox: The student of theory is wise to remember the nature of that which he studies. It is well to regard theoretical concepts in their true light when studying the speculations of Orson Pratt or the works of all other theorists whether they be philosophers, scientists, or theologians. Such theories may be judged by the standards of truth when their perceptibility justifies their identification as laws. We are not justified in using them to

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1J.D., Vol. 7, p. 374. Pratt spoke to a General Conference of the Church, January 29, 1860. His remarks included an admission of sorrow felt for having given the people certain points of doctrine.
arrive at dogmatic conclusions, however, until such verification is established. We have no such verification concerning Pratt's theories of materialism and causation. Some metaphysical entities with which they deal are not as yet perceptible. We have, therefore, no scientific verification. Revelation concerning these same entities has not as yet been forthcoming. We have, therefore, no properly authoritative, or divine verification. It must be remembered that lack of verification does not render a given theory useless or untrue, however, since the lack may at some time be supplied. On the other hand it is pointless to maintain confidence in theories which are in opposition to known laws the truthfulness of which is justifiably established.

It is likely that Orson Pratt would have been the first to declare the supremacy of the scriptures and revelation over the concepts of his theories when incompatibility existed. His attitude was plainly exemplified by his own submission to proper authority when the occasion required. It is not illogical to believe that he would wish students of his works to manifest the same spirit in their studies, i.e., that if theoretic speculation should lead to disagreement with the official doctrines of the Church given by revelation, the latter represents the truth and the former are probably in error.

There may be some who, upon acquiring superficial familiarity with the writings of Orson Pratt, accuse him of tending toward the establishing of a naturalistic philosophy because
of some of his theories regarding self-moving particles of matter. There seems to be no justification for this view whatever. Pratt recognized God as the framer of laws by which all things are governed. This was a principle from which the Mormon philosopher never departed. In a discourse given the year before his death he affirmed the strength of his belief with this statement:

The materials out of which our earth is formed are also governed by law. Not only the earth as an organized world, but the very materials themselves, are governed by laws. These laws were given of God; and when we search into the laws, not on nature merely, but the laws of God, and the more we comprehend the laws by which materials are governed, the more we understand the laws of God and his operations in the universe.  

A Tribute to Orson Pratt.—Many and varied may be the judgements passed on Pratt's philosophic ideas. He spoke as a single voice amid concourses of scientific and philosophic thinkers. His ideas were new, strange, and revolutionary to both the academic and theological world. His work attracted the attention of only a few because he had not achieved world recognition as a scholar. These few were largely those who were offended by his ideas and felt moved to defend themselves against his damaging implications. His opponents, however, only enhanced the stature of the man. In challenging him, they gave him the opportunity to demonstrate the caliber of his thought by meeting their opposition head-on with additional arguments.

1Lundwall, loc. cit., p. 482.
Pratt was loved and admired by his own people although sometimes criticized with considerable severity. He was loved best, perhaps, by those within the Church who differed most with his concepts. His people knew him to be a powerful influence for good and a fearless enemy of falsehood and error. It would indeed be difficult to point to a figure in church history whose life had been more dedicated to the service of his God and his fellow men. He labored diligently from the day of his conversion until his death in an inspiring example of selflessness and devotion.

There are many traits of character which can be used to determine the measure of a man. One of the most critical, however, is the yardstick of humility. Countless men, otherwise great, have fallen before this most revealing measure. Not so with Orson Pratt. It is undeniably indicative of true greatness when a man who had risen to such heights in leadership and responsibility, as had Pratt, are put in the crucible of public chastisement and emerge full of love for and submission to those whose correction he is called upon to bear.

Obedience to proper authority had been the principle over which many otherwise good and capable men had fallen in the early history of the Church. Many had verbally sustained the authority which directed them, but when put to the test failed to subdue their pride and ambition. Herein, perhaps, lies the best demonstration of Orson Pratt's great wisdom. He must have known himself to be in possession of remarkable intellect. He
could not have been unaware of his strength, influence, and
capacity for great achievements. Yet, as some others of his
day had failed to do, he was ever mindful of the source of
these attributes and of the responsibility their possession
entailed. It may not always have been easy for him to submit
—he admits this—but he did submit, and it was to his ever-
lasting credit. The principle of obedience may well be the
lesson of greatest value that can be derived from observation
of the life and works of this man.

Orson Pratt believed himself to be justifying the truth
in all his writings, preachings, and works. His academic in-
tegrity was sacrosanct. He had a passion for learning and a
thirst for knowledge which was indeed unique. His personal
life was above reproach in every respect, and his accomplish-
ments undeniably outstanding. With all that can be said in
eulogy of him, however, one gift must be recognized in advance
of all others: Orson Pratt had learned the secret of joy—he
loved the Lord his God with all his mind, might, and strength,
and he loved his fellow men as himself.
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ABSTRACT

Orson Pratt's impressive achievements in mathematics and the physical sciences were realized through his driving passion for knowledge and in spite of his membership in an age unembellished by the educational opportunities we now enjoy. His philosophic concepts appear to have their genesis in the theology of Mormonism and the ideology of its Prophet, Joseph Smith, with whom Pratt came in early contact.

Materialism.--The Nicene Confession's incomprehensible concept of Deity and its immaterialist proponents received initial attention in Pratt's philosophic attack. Belief in a partless, passionless, formless God existing everywhere yet nowhere, Pratt avowed, is absurd. The traditional immaterialization of that being did not relieve the absurdity. Such a diffused substance may have no quality or property in common with any form of matter. Temporal and spatial relationships are qualities of all matter. The boundlessness of space and endlessness of duration are necessary truths, Pratt argued, and anything that exists must exist in time and space. No wholly immaterial substance can then exist, since temporal and spatial contexts are necessary existential criteria. Pratt concluded that all substances are material—even mind or spirit, which was long the Immaterialists' prime example. Mind or spirit is
more perfectly refined—more highly developed matter—than coarser physical matter with which we are more commonly associated. It nonetheless shares the here-now, there-then relationships of all other matter. Action, reaction, magnitude and figure are other common characteristics of all matter.

Causation.—Universal materialism led Pratt to speculation regarding causation. He viewed all things as composed of ultimate atoms that are self-moving and intelligent. They willfully obey or disobey governing laws. All organizations of things and beings that have had a beginning, Pratt affirmed, are results of self-designs and self-combinations of these ultimate atoms. All atoms initially possessed equal capacities for knowledge and wisdom gained through experience. The most advanced atoms combined to form the person of God who, by virtue of greater knowledge and power, prescribes the laws of operation for all other intelligence. Man's potential, however, equals that of Deity, because of the sameness of the ultimate particles.

The self-moving, intelligent qualities of atoms permitted Pratt to reject nihilistic theories of creation. No ultimate particle was created in a brought-into-being sense by an arbitrary unmoved mover. Pratt defended the eternality of all substance. Something cannot be created from nothing. Since things exist, all substances of things and beings must be eternal.
Doctrinal Roots and Criticism.--Many bases of Pratt's materialistic concepts are paralleled in antecedent Church doctrine with which Pratt must have been familiar. He did not claim authorship of his concepts. His philosophy may more correctly be viewed as interpretation of doctrine.

Brigham Young was a trenchant critic of some of Pratt's concepts and made it clear that these were not to be considered officially doctrinal. Pratt's character, faith, and teachings of fundamental Gospel principles were simultaneously lauded by the same critic. Pratt's public apology for having preached theory as doctrine reveals his impressive stature.

The author finds Pratt's materialistic ideas generally acceptable philosophically. Some exception is taken to his causal theory. It appears unnecessarily monistic and discourages the concept of eternal individuality and identity of beings. Pratt was, however, of unquestionably superior intellect in his day, a challenge to subsequent theological and philosophical thinkers, and a generous contributor to his people.

Chairman

Member