

JOSEPH SMITH IN LITERATURE.

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“Joseph Smith in literature—what a paradox!” I think I hear some wiseacre say, as he glances at the caption of this article. “Joseph Smith in literature—what a misyoking of terms; what a manifest absurdity!”

It is so common in the world to couple the name of “the ‘Mormon’ prophet” with everything that stands for lack of culture and enlightenment, to identify him with all that represents ignorance and even vice, that I shall not be surprised if my allusion to him as a literary character taxes to some extent the credulity of a certain class of readers. I refer particularly to non-“Mormon” readers and to such as might as well be non-“Mormons” so far as their knowledge of this subject is concerned. But the greater number of those who peruse these pages will see in the title chosen for this treatise nothing that should occasion the least astonishment. The reason is simple: they know Joseph Smith; know him through his writings, his published utterances, if not from personal reminiscence; while the others know him not, perhaps have never read anything that he either wrote or said, and have no conceptions concerning him, save those born of hearsay and tradition.

That the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints professed or even aspired to be a literary man, I shall not attempt to prove; for the attempt would be futile. He loved literature; his fondness for it is apparent, not only from his verbal expressions of appreciation, but also from his efforts to foster and encourage it. His penchant for the study of languages is well known, also his liking for history and poetry. He was gen-

erous, even enthusiastic, in his praise of any meritorious work, literary or otherwise; and, as a founder of schools and a steadfast friend of education from the beginning to the closing of his career, gave ample evidence of his interest and zeal in the general cause of culture and advancement. But there is nothing to indicate that he deemed himself gifted in a literary way, or strove consciously to create a literary work.

And yet, Joseph Smith, the revelator of "Mormonism," was potentially, if not actually, a literary giant. He produced literature which, if not prized today as it should be, even by his own people, and if scouted and ridiculed by the "wise and prudent" of the world, is only passing through the experience usual to such characters and their creations, by reason of a too close proximity to the languid indifference or prejudiced judgment of their contemporaries.

"Seven wealthy towns contend for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

Joseph Smith was not a Homer, nor a Shakespeare, nor a Milton. He was more. He was a prophet, and consequently a poet; and would have been, had he never written a line of verse or prose. A gold mine may not be a gold mine until the precious metal has been discovered and brought to the surface; but the gold may be there nevertheless. The mining for it does not create it—does not deposit it in the place where found. It is so with poesy, so with all literary power. Its existence does not depend upon the recognition given to or withheld from it; does not even depend upon culture and development. The inward truth is more than the outward expression. Conception is greater than birth.

The gift of poesy and the gift of prophecy are akin. They are almost identical. Perhaps the only difference between them is one of degree. If prophecy is greater than poesy, it is because it includes it, and is capable of receiving a more direct and a fuller inspiration. But the highest poetry is prophetic; there is always in it a suggestion of infinity. Poesy is thus shown to contain the elements of prophecy. It is as natural for a prophet to poetize, as for a poet to dwell upon the future, to idealize the real. Carlyle discovered that the ancient word *Vates* meant both

prophet and poet,' and he contends that fundamentally they are the same, "in this most important respect especially, that they have penetrated, both of them, into the sacred mystery of the universe--what Goethe calls 'the open secret,' * * * open to all, seen by almost none." Poets may not be prophets in the same sense and degree as the sacred seers and oracles of Holy Writ, but the gift of poesy and the gift of prophecy are related, and there is a point where the two blend and become one.

If you doubt, reader, that the prophets are poets, read their predictions, and ask yourself--if you are a competent judge--whether grander poems ever fell from the point of human pen. The book of Job, the writings of Isaiah, the parables and sayings of the Savior, the solemn and sublime melody of the Apocalypse. Are they not poems as well as prophecies, and were not their authors among the greatest of the sons of song?

It is in the light of these examples that I would have you survey Joseph Smith. Being a prophet he must be a poet. It was inevitable. If a poet, what poems did he produce? Ah, reader, there is more than that involved. I do not mean that he was a maker of verses, a builder of rhymes, or that he needed to be, in order to constitute him a poet, or to qualify him for his prophetic mission. But he had to have the poetic instinct, the poetic insight--the power to recognize, comprehend and interpret the mystery of life, the symbolism of the universe; a power inherent in prophecy, in the sacred gift of seership, with which he was so eminently endowed. This was what made him a poet. And no man or woman, not a poet, in the same sense, to a greater or less degree, will ever be able to understand Joseph Smith, or appreciate to the full the beauty, sublimity and significance of his mission as a forerunner of the Son of God. Only these know the voice of the Shepherd. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," and the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of poesy spring from a common source.

But this is generalization. What of the details? This is in the abstract. What are the concrete phases of the question? How did Joseph Smith express his poetic ideals? What proof have we of his inherent love of literature?

"Seek ye out of the best books, words of wisdom; seek learn-

ing, even by study, and also by faith." These are the words of Joseph Smith, or the words of the Almighty, through him, to the Latter-day Saints.

Why did the Lord so instruct His prophet? Why did the Prophet so teach his people? It was because God had designed, and the Prophet had foreseen, a great and glorious future for that people. Chosen himself in weakness, so far as this world's wisdom was concerned, as a foundation stone of the mighty structure that is destined to tower heavenward, reflecting from polished walls and glittering spires the splendors of eternity, he knew there must come a time, unless One who cannot lie had sworn falsely, when Zion, as the head and front of a world's civilization, would arise and shine, "the joy of the whole earth," the seat of learning, the source of wisdom, and the centre of political power; when, side by side with pure religion, would flourish art and science, her fair daughters; when music, poetry, painting, sculpture, oratory and the drama—rays of light from the same central sun, no longer refracted and discolored by the many-hued prisms of man's sensuality—would throw their white radiance full and direct upon the mirror-like glory of her towers; when the science of earth and the wisdom of heaven would walk hand in hand, interpreting each other; when philosophy would drink from wells of living truth, no longer draining the deadly hemlock of error, to poison the pure air with the illusions of sophistry; when Zion's sons and Zion's daughters, as famed for intelligence and culture as for beauty, purity and truth, would entertain kings and nobles, would sit upon thrones themselves, or go forth as shafts of light from the bow of the Almighty, as messengers and ambassadors to the nations!

Joseph saw all this; he knew it was inevitable; that such were the natural flowers and fruits of the work which God had planted. The roots of the tree might not show it so well—their mission was to lie hidden in the earth, ignored and trampled on by men; but the branches in a day to come would prove it. Rough and rugged himself, as the granite boulders of yonder hills, he knew, and his brethren around him knew, that upon the strong basic stones of which they were symbolical—the massive foundations of the past—the great Architect would rear the superstructure of the future; that the youth of Israel would build upon the

beginnings made by heroic fathers and mothers, these differing necessarily from their offspring, but only as the foundations of a building must differ from the walls and spires. Joseph knew that his people must progress, that their destiny demanded it; that culture is the duty of man, as intelligence is the glory of God. That is why he said: "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study, and also by faith."

Learning is another name for literature. In counseling his people to "seek learning," therefore, this supposedly ignorant and illiterate man was virtually advising them to cultivate literature. The "best books" here mentioned do not mean merely the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, Church works and religious writings, though these must ever lie at the basis of "Mormon" literature. History, poetry, philosophy, art and science, languages, laws, and the principles of government,—all truth, in short, is included in that comprehensive phrase. Yes, it even means inspiration, revelation; for does it not say: "Seek learning by study, and *also* by faith?"

But the Prophet was not content to exhort others to progress. He set the example, and led out along the lines of advancement. His roughness became smooth, his illiteracy (for he was illiterate at first) gave way to learning. His potential powers became actual possessions, through study, experience and development. He gave a meaning to knowledge that it had never known, and made education the synonym for salvation. "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge." "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." "If he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power, than many men who are on the earth." These are among Joseph Smith's teachings. He also taught that whatever principles of intelligence we attain to in this life, they will rise with us in the resurrection; and that if one soul, by greater diligence and faithfulness acquires more intelligence than another, it will have just that much advantage in the world to come.

Did it ever occur to those careless, not to say shallow critics, who think they see in "Mormonism" nothing but sin and depravity; who regard the followers of Joseph Smith as ignoramus,

know-nothings, to whom books are a bore and literature a term without meaning, that a book looms up at the very beginning of "Mormon" history—that "Mormonism's" first production was a piece of literature, the most remarkable of modern times?

More than three centuries had passed since the discovery of America by Columbus. He found here,—what? Forests, Indians, and tropical fruits; little else. But they who came after him found more. Peeping from the crust of the earth, north, south, east and west, were the relics of a civilization that would have shamed the glory of Egypt in her palmiest days. Nations had risen and fallen upon this land before whose fame and power the might of Rome, the wealth of Asia, would have paled as stars before the sun. Whence came they? What were their names? Why had they fallen? None knew. The sad sea waves and the sighing winds answered not, but continued to chant in mournful numbers a solemn requiem for the dead. The natives could not tell, except in tales and traditions as vague and shadowy as the legends of the Druids, or the runic fables of the Norsemen. Who, then, would answer? One day a little boy went into the woods and prayed. The heavens heard, and gave him more than he had asked. A book came forth by the power of God; a buried record, hidden in a hill. It told the story of the past, it prophesied of the future; and from that hour, Joseph Smith, the "Mormon" Prophet, was the real discoverer of America.

Whatever may be said of the crudities of the Book of Mormon,—and they are conceded,—it is a most remarkable record, a masterpiece in its way, breathing a spirit and a genius all its own. The very character of the translator, Joseph Smith, seems stamped upon it. Fearless as an angel; humble as a child.

"And he that will contend against the word of the Lord, let him be accursed; and he that shall deny these things, let him be accursed; for unto them will I show no greater things, saith Jesus Christ, for I am he who speaketh."

Does anyone having faith in "Mormonism," suppose that the Book of Mormon came by chance? Is there a Latter-day Saint who believes that any boy of fourteen years, humble enough to ask wisdom of the All-wise, could have received just what Joseph Smith received, in answer to the most earnest prayer? God works with

all men according to their faith, but he also works with them according to their gifts, their power and their capacity. Not every good man, filled with faith, is a prophet, seer, and revelator, like Joseph Smith. All good gifts are from God, and "the Spirit divideth unto every man severally as he will;" but doubtless there are some qualities inherent in the original intelligence, that help to qualify each soul for its own peculiar mission. Joseph was a "choice seer." Had he not been, he could not have beheld the Father and the Son. He was essentially a literary spirit, or he could never have translated the Nephite record. The Urim and Thummim, in the hands of one not qualified to use it, would have been a worthless instrument; as much so as the Liahona to Lehi and his colony without the exercise of faith. "I cannot read a sealed book," was the reply of the learned Professor Anthon to Martin Harris, with reference to the metallic plates containing the Book of Mormon. Any man, similarly ungifted, might have said the same. The seven-sealed book of the Apocalypse could only be opened by "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Not only the gift, but the spirit of it, must be present. The machinery, however perfect, waits for the motive power. With all his prophetic equipment, his innate seeric qualities, Joseph Smith could only translate, could only prophesy, could only see, hear, and utter the things of God, when he was thoroughly *en rapport* with the heavens, when the spirit and power of his gift was upon him.

The Book of Mormon is not his only contribution to literature. He had barely completed the translation of those ancient plates, when he undertook another work, scarcely secondary in importance. It was a translation, or more correctly speaking, a revision of the Hebrew Scriptures. He had learned from the Book of Mormon that "many plain and precious truths," properly belonging to the Bible, had been lost or taken away by uninspired translators, thus rendering vague and uncertain the teachings of that sacred record. These missing parts he purposed to restore, as directed and empowered by the spirit of revelation. What is sometimes called the "Inspired Translation" was the result. Parts of it may be found in the Pearl of Great Price, under the headings, "Visions of Moses," "Writings of Moses," or, as rendered by the latest edition, "The Book of Moses." At a later period he translated in

like manner, the Book of Abraham, from papyrus found upon the bodies of mummies brought from the catacombs of Egypt.

In the volume known as the Doctrine and Covenants, the latest book put forth by the latter-day Prophet, we come face to face with his literary style, as stamped upon the word of God of which he was the original revelator. Here are no translations, such as the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham; here is no revision, such as the "Inspired Translation;" but revelation, immediate and direct, constituting him the sole human oracle of the divine utterance.

It may be objected that these revelations are God's utterances, and therefore, not the words nor the works of Joseph Smith. I answer that they are God's and Joseph's combined. The Prophet was not a mere machine, a mere speaking trumpet, in the process of receiving and giving the word of God. He still had his agency, and was an intelligent, self-acting being, though the inspired instrument and mouthpiece of Deity. The word of God that came to him was independent of him, and yet his mind was the mold in which it was formed; his vocabulary the earthly vehicle of expression. That which is divinely begotten may have human conception and delivery. Was it not so with Christ, the very Word incarnate. An analogy is found in the spirit, the immortal spirit, clothing itself in mortal clay, which also becomes immortal; the two combined constituting the soul. Hence, these divine communications, divine in origin and in utterance, though they are the revelations of Jesus Christ, spiritually, yet in the letter they bear the impress of Joseph Smith, and are the product of his genius, just as much as the inspired writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, are the literary creations of those ancient seers.

In addition to the revelations and translations, we have the Prophet's personal narratives and every-day comments, as illustrative of his literary style. I will now present a few excerpts, beginning with the following paragraphs from his autobiography. Says Joseph the Seer:

I was born in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five, on the twenty-third day of December, in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, state of Vermont. * * * My father, Joseph Smith, Senior, left the state of Vermont, and moved to Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) county, in the state of New York, when I was in my tenth year, or thereabouts. In about four years

after my father's arrival in Palmyra, he moved with his family into Manchester, in the same county.

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Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country.

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I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely—my mother Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia. During this time of great excitement, my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

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While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.

At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to "ask of God," concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture. So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was

seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. 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!

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong. * * * When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven.

Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before-mentioned religious excitement; and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the Apostles, and that there would never be any more of them. I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me.

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However, * * * though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; and I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it.

This narrative may have faults; it may not be a perfect piece of rhetoric; but it is in good form throughout, and in places beautiful.

Take now a selection from the Book of Moses, called in Joseph's personal history, The Prophecy of Enoch, beginning with a brief description of the Zion of old, and ending with a reference to the Zion of the last days. Here are both beauty and power:

And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart, and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.

And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion.

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And it came to pass that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth; and he beheld, and lo, Zion in process of time, was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Behold mine abode forever.

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And he beheld Satan; and he had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced.

And Enoch beheld angels descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son; and the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion.

And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying, How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?

And Enoch said unto the Lord, How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?

And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still;

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And thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations, from all eternity to all eternity; and naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne; and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end; how is it thou canst weep?

The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day that I created them; and in the Garden of Eden gave I unto man his agency;

And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood;

And the fire of mine indignation is kindled against them; and in my hot displeasure will I send in the floods upon them.

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Wherefore, for this shall the heavens weep, yea, and all the workmanship of mine hands.

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Enoch, and told Enoch all the doings of the children of men; wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon their wickedness and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook.

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And it came to pass that Enoch looked; and from Noah, he beheld all the families of the earth; and he cried unto the Lord saying: When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified, and have eternal life?

And the Lord said, It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance.

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And it came to pass that Enoch looked upon the earth; and he heard a voice from the bowels thereof, saying: wo, wo, is me, the mother of men; I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children. When shall I rest, and be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest, and righteousness for a season abide upon my face?

And when Enoch heard the earth mourn, he wept, and cried unto the Lord, saying, O Lord, wilt thou not have compassion upon the earth? Wilt thou not bless the children of Noah?

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And the Lord could not withhold; and he covenanted with Enoch, and sware unto him with an oath, that he would stay the floods; that he would call upon the children of Noah.

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And it came to pass that Enoch cried unto the Lord, saying, When the Son of Man cometh in the flesh, shall the earth rest?

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And the Lord said unto Enoch; Look; and he looked and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men.

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And again Enoch wept and cried unto the Lord, saying, When shall the earth rest?

And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father; and he called unto the Lord, saying, Wilt thou not come again upon the earth?

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And the Lord said unto Enoch, As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfill the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah.

And the day shall come that the earth shall rest; but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the

heavens shall shake and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve;

And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.

And the Lord said unto Enoch, Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other;

And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest.

What could be more poetic, more replete with dramatic power, than the picture of Earth, "the mother of men," mourning like Rachel for her children? What more pathetic than the prayer of Enoch in behalf of Mother Earth and "the children of Noah?" What more sublime than the answer of "the God of heaven" to the prophet's tearful petition? Marvelous must have been the scope and power of a mind that could thus grasp the relationship between the ancient and the modern Zions, and with one mighty sweep of thought compass the whole range of human history. Is it not evident that Joseph Smith was a poet? Is his literary genius any longer a legitimate subject for doubt?

The next selection shall be from the Doctrine and Covenants. The time is March, 1839. The Latter-day Saints, thwarted temporarily in their work of building the modern Zion, have been driven with fire and sword from the State of Missouri. The Prophet, with a few friends, remains a prisoner in Liberty jail. Torn from the bosom of his family, betrayed into the hands of heartless foes, after being condemned to death and narrowly escaping execution by court martial, he is lingering in durance vile, subjected to every insult and outrage that the cruelty of his captors can devise. In the agony of his spirit, he cries out:

O God! where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?

How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea, thy pure eye, behold

from the eternal heavens, the wrongs of thy people, and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?

Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened towards them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion towards them?

O Lord God Almighty, Maker of the heaven, earth, and seas, and of all things that in them are, and who controlleth and subjecteth the devil, and the dark and benighted dominion of Shayole! Stretch forth thy hand; let thine eye pierce; let thy pavilion be taken up; let thy hiding place no longer be covered; let thine ear be inclined; let thine heart be softened, and thy bowels moved with compassion towards us;

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Remember thy suffering saints, O our God! and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever.

The God whom he has invoked, thus answers him:

My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

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Thou art not yet as Job; thy friends do not contend against thee, neither charge thee with transgression;

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And they who do charge thee with transgression, their hopes shall be blasted, and their prospects shall melt away as the hoar frost melteth before the burning rays of the rising sun.

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The ends of the earth shall enquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee,

While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand.

And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors; * * * and thy God shall stand by thee for ever and ever.

If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; if thou art in perils among robbers; if thou art in perils by land or by sea;

If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? And if then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb;

And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

The Son of Man hath descended below them all; art thou greater than he?

Therefore, hold on thy way, and the Priesthood shall remain with thee, for their bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you for ever and ever.

These are certainly splendid passages, and they teach lofty principles. The mystery of human suffering, which remained a mystery to patient Job, is here solved. Ralph Waldo Emerson had not yet written his noble essay on "Compensation;" the poet Lowell had not uttered his sublime sentiment:

'Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder up,
Whose golden rounds are our calamities;

When Joseph Smith proclaimed the very substance of their inspired teachings, in his pathetic prayer and prophecy in Liberty Jail. Here are a few more paragraphs from the same section; the Prophet's earnest pronouncement upon the subject of unrighteous dominion:

Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson: That the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven? and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood, or the authority of that man.

Behold! ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks; to persecute the Saints, and to fight against God.

We have learned, by sad experience, that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile.

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprov'd, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death;

Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrine of the Priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy sceptre an unchanging sceptre of righteousness and truth, and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee for ever and ever.

One more selection from the Doctrine and Covenants—a portrayal of "Mormonism's" sublime principle of universal salvation; the Prophet's wonderful vision of the different degrees of glory in the "many mansions" of the Father:

We, Joseph Smith, jun., and Sidney Rigdon, being in the Spirit on the sixteenth of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two, by the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God—even those things which were from the beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his Only Begotten Son, * * * whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision.

* * * * *

And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son, whom the Father loved, and who was in the bosom of the Father—was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son, and was called Perdition, for the heavens wept over him—he was called Lucifer, a son of the morning.

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And we saw a vision of the sufferings of those with whom he made war and overcame, for thus came the voice of the Lord unto us.

Thus saith the Lord, concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves, through the power of the devil, to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power: They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born, for they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come, having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father—having

crucified him unto themselves, and put him to an open shame. These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels, and the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power; yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath; for all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made.

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And again, we bear record, for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ, concerning them who come forth in the resurrection of the just;

They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given, that by keeping his commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power, and who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true. They are they who are the church of the first born. They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things. They are they who are Priests and Kings, who have received of his fullness, and of his glory, and are Priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son; wherefore, as it is written, they are Gods, even the Sons of God. Wherefore all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's and Christ is God's.

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These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.

And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the first born, who have received the fullness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament. Behold, these are they who died without law, and also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fullness. These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fullness of the Father; wherefore they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun. These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.

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And again, we saw the glory of the telestial, which glory is that of the lesser,

even as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament. These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus. These are they who deny not the Holy Spirit. These are they who are thrust down to hell. These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb shall have finished his work. These are they who receive not of his fullness in the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial; and the terrestrial through the ministration of the celestial; and also the telestial receive it of the administering of angels who are appointed to minister for them, or who are appointed to be ministering spirits for them, for they shall be heirs of salvation.

And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one. And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one. And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one, for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world;

For these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas. These are they who say they are some of one and some of another—some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch; but receive not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant. * * * These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fullness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet, and shall have perfected his work; when he shall deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father spotless, saying—I have overcome and have trodden the winepress alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign for ever and ever.

But behold, and lo, we saw the glory and the inhabitants of the telestial world, that they were as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the sea shore, and heard the voice of the Lord saying—these all shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess to him who sits upon the throne for ever and ever; for they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared. And they shall be servants of the Most High, but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.

This is the end of the vision which we saw, which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the Spirit.

The glory of such a vision must have been indescribable. Who but Joseph Smith could have portrayed it even in part? He attempted on one occasion to express some of these same truths in

verse, but the attempt was a comparative failure. No rhyme could do justice to such a theme. The effort proved, however, that this prophet was no exception to his class; that he had a taste for poetizing, and could have been a master in the art had he practiced for the necessary skill. But his time on earth was too short for every accomplishment; his life too full of toil and trouble for the cultivation of *belle lettres*.

Whatever may be said or thought by others, I affirm that the mind which could grasp such splendid and exalted principles, and utter them in a manner so powerful, was essentially a literary mind, the mind of a prophet and a poet, than whom none mightier, save the very Son of God, ever struck the harp of truth and made it vibrant with the music of the spheres.

“What poem did Joseph Smith produce?” He produced the great poem called “Mormonism,” the grandest and sublimest epic ever conceived and brought forth by the mind of man. The highest concepts of former poets and prophets are but parts of his concept, mere chapters of his book; even as the dispensations in which they figured were but tributary to this greatest of dispensations over which he presides. They are the rivers to his ocean, the forerunners to his fulfilment. And yet he was not the great fulfilment. He stands upon the shoulders of the former prophets, and sees farther than any of the earlier seers. But above and beyond all, is Christ, the Creator, the divine Author of this divinest of poems, which, sounded as a prophecy in pre-existent spheres, finds its fullest human expression in the heaven-inspired song sung by the Prophet of the Last Dispensation.

Salt Lake City, Utah.