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Parley Pratt, the Broken Planet of *Paradise Lost*, and the Creation of Mormon Theology

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Perhaps no feature of the theology of the early Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) is as bold or conceptually striking as its theory of matter. "Mormon thinking," as John Durham Peters states, "melts down the metaphysical barrier between matter and spirit."¹ Mormonism's dissolution of the boundary between matter and spirit would in the early nineteenth century establish itself at the heart of the new religion's boldest envisions of the world, or worlds, beyond our familiar earth. A belief in the monistic union of matter and spirit would become a fundamental conceptual feature of many of the church's central and most singular doctrines: the eternal preexistence of all souls, the unending progression of the heavenly gods to ever higher states of divinity, and the human goal of an eventual heavenly exaltation to the status of God. But very little of the eventual Mormon doctrine of monism, or of the exuberant dynamism of Mormon soteriology, was a feature of the religion when it first appeared on the nineteenth century American landscape. As presented in Joseph Smith's

Book of Mormon, published in 1830, the faith in its earliest years reproduced Christianity's long-established belief in the stark opposition of matter and spirit. Because "the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam," we are told in the *Book of Mormon*, "the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein" leads to "eternal death."² But if Mormon thought emerged on the national scene with a somewhat conventional Christian derogation of the body, its gestures toward the established dualism of body and soul would prove to be short-lived. In a dynamic intellectual environment led by one of the prophet Joseph Smith's 12 apostles, Parley P. Pratt, as well as by Smith himself, Mormonism would undergo a radical transformation of its understanding of the ties of matter and spirit not only to one another, but also, and most especially, to God, and to the rest of God's creation. A radical monism of matter and spirit would position itself at the heart of Mormonism's extraordinary soteriology of a materialist process, at once human and divine, of endless upward mobility.

There is evidence of a few different sources of intellectual inspiration for Pratt and Smith's early Mormon turn, in the later 1830s, to a radical monism of body and spirit. But a central source, as I hope to show in this essay, was a selection of works by John Milton.³ In Pratt's 1840 pamphlet on *The Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter*, a prophetic essay that launches the theological ambition of nineteenth century America's most boldly speculative religion, we see the indelible traces of one of seventeenth century England's most boldly speculative poets. Pratt's treatise, written in a Missouri prison, is an important document in U.S. religious history for many reasons. *The Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter* contains the first published expression of some of the most important and distinctive features of Mormon theology. It also instances the boldness of the Mormon metaphysical imagination, which passionately weds an idiosyncratic science, or metaphysics, of matter, on the one hand, with the Christian theology of creation, fall, and redemption, on the other. Pratt begins and ends the pamphlet with a speculative consideration of the eternal constitution of the two principles of matter and spirit. But his

scientific meditation on “the eternal duration of matter” bookends a distinctive account of world history, which begins with an elaborate amplification of the Creation narrative from Genesis, moves to an ecstatic verse prophesy of the birth of the Savior, and concludes, in a return to prose, with an account of the end-times that features Christ’s thousand-year reign as universal king from his throne in Jerusalem.

Pratt’s focus on matter was no doubt a response to a more general flurry of Christian metaphysical speculation in the early nineteenth century. A primary influence on this particular strain of Mormon thought, as we will see, was certainly the Scottish minister and philosopher Thomas Dick (1774–1857).⁴ But while students of early Mormon theology have scoured the period’s intellectual world for conceptual links to the thought of Mormonism’s founder, Joseph Smith, and his apostles, they have neglected to consider another, far less obscure, set of texts shaping the early Mormon drive to understand Scripture through the lens of the philosophy of matter: the work of John Milton, whose *Paradise Lost* sought ambitiously to wed the form of the heroic epic of Homer and Virgil to the stirring didactic poetry of the emphatically materialist Lucretius.

Before pressing the case for what may seem the unlikely influence of the overwhelmingly learned Milton on the minimally educated Parley Pratt or Joseph Smith, let me first make note of the familiarity that a wide swath of nineteenth century Americans had not only with *Paradise Lost* but also, and perhaps more surprising, with some of the central arguments of Milton’s heretical treatise, *De doctrina Christiana*.⁵ We know that readers capable and willing to take on the intellectual challenge of reading Milton’s densely allusive, argumentatively sophisticated epic had many opportunities to do so. Nearly a dozen distinct editions of *Paradise Lost* were printed in the United States in the 1820s and 1830s, a phenomenon that makes credible Perry Miller’s famous claim that Milton’s epic had established itself on American soil “not so much a secondary Book of Genesis [but] as a substitute for the original.”⁶ But what of readers whose academic training may have fallen short

of the preparation necessary to engage with Milton's high-cultural masterpiece? Many of them—including the sometime Methodist Joseph Smith and his early Methodist apostles and followers—had absorbed the language of *Paradise Lost* in the Milton-soaked hymns penned by Methodism co-founder Charles Wesley.⁷ Many, too, took advantage of the reading aids available for the novice's perusal of *Paradise Lost*. Simplified, rewritten editions of Milton's epic were widely available, John Wesley's heavily abridged *Extract from Milton's Paradise Lost* perhaps foremost among them.⁸ The United States saw the publication, for the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of the English writer Eliza Weaver Bradburn's popular *Story of "Paradise Lost," for Children*, which gave readers a surprisingly detailed account of the epic's plot.⁹

The wide saturation of Milton's poem in the period's literary and religious culture no doubt produced a heightened interest in the contemporary discovery of Milton's hitherto unknown theological treatise, whose heresies would be exposed to U.S. readers when an English translation, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, was published in Boston in 1826. The heretical opinions Milton expressed in the *Treatise* on a number of controversial matters—from the createdness of the Son of God to the permissibility of polygamy—were amply publicized in a popular pamphlet by William Ellery Channing, titled *Remarks on the Character and Writings of John Milton*.¹⁰ Channing, as I have argued elsewhere, devoted in that essay a disproportionate amount of space to Milton's metaphysics of matter and spirit, championing the boldness of the poet's heterodox imagination with regard to many of the theological and philosophical issues that would prove especially urgent for the first generation of Mormon theologians.¹¹ The warm appreciation with which Channing described the scandal of Milton's heterodox opinions soon emerged as its own scandal, as the Christian press in the United States rushed to denounce the wayward faith of both Milton and Channing.¹² In the decade following the publication of both the *Treatise* and Channing's apologetic account of its heresies, Milton, for many American readers, was less the immortal, Christian heir of Homer and Virgil than the versifying

metaphysician given to blasphemous expressions of the identity of Christ and the legality of plural marriage.

The focus of this essay will rest with Parley Pratt's engagement with Milton's spiritual materialism, as well as the additional heterodoxy, somewhat hesitantly forwarded in *Paradise Lost*, of the existence of other worlds. It is worth noting briefly, though, that an appropriation of other, more recognizable, features of Milton's work is discernible throughout Pratt's pamphlet on matter. Take, for instance, Pratt's striking description of the creation of the first couple. Both Adam and Eve, he explains, are "formed of noble principles." But Adam in addition bears "in his godlike features the emblems of authority and dominion." As his "fair consort," Pratt's Eve lacks those Adamic emblems of authority and absolute rule. But she manages nonetheless to "combin[e] in her person and features the noble and majestic expression of manhood" already seen in Adam with "the soft and gentle, the modest and retiring graces of angelic sweetness and purity."¹³ In assembling his account of Adam and Eve, Pratt relies on a cluster of images drawn from book 4 of *Paradise Lost*. He reproduces the poem's initial presentation of Adam and his "fair consort" Eve as a united pair, as "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall," who in their "naked majesty seemed lords of all" (*PL* 4.288, 290).¹⁴ And with related fidelity he reproduces Milton's means of delineating sexual difference and its cultural significance: in *Paradise Lost*, Adam's "fair large front and eye sublime declared / Absolute rule," while the more retiring Eve, who was formed "for softness... and sweet attractive grace," is seen naturally to yield to Adam "with coy submission, modest pride, / And sweet reluctant amorous delay" (*PL* 4.300–01, 298, 310–11). Pratt's pamphlet is even punctuated with what appears to be a version of the young Milton's ode *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*. Celebrating "the birth of king Messiah," Pratt interrupts the prose of his metaphysical speculations with a rhapsodic burst of 24 lines of blank verse that conjure a vision of "choirs of angels—mingling their music / With the sons of earth" to produce a familiarly Miltonic image of sublime song.¹⁵ As is the case throughout so much of Milton's youthful ode, it is not, for Pratt,

Christ's eventual sacrifice by which we are redeemed from the effects of the Fall. It is the celebratory event of the birth itself, as well as the angelic music joining heaven with earth that accompanies that birth, which present themselves as the key precipitants of redemption.¹⁶ Discrete elements of Milton's poetry, some generic and structural, others smaller units of diction and phrasing, find themselves reassembled in Pratt's early Mormon account of Creation and redemption.

The Miltonic fragments populating Pratt's thesis do not appear to have been chosen at random. Pratt seems instinctively to select for heterodoxy when taking advantage of the word-hoard and image-hoard Milton made available in his poetry and prose. In the specific case of Milton's Nativity ode, the Mormon's principle of selection is likely informed by his engagement with the bold pseudoscience of the equally Milton-infused Scottish minister Thomas Dick, who had argued that the reported audibility of the angelic choir at Christ's Nativity was proof of the existence of intelligent and intelligible beings from other worlds.¹⁷ It was by means of Pratt's engagement with *Paradise Lost*, or more particularly Pratt's engagement with *Paradise Lost* as mediated by Thomas Dick, that the Mormon theologian arrived at one of the most important, and most enduring, features of Mormon belief: God's creation of the universe through the "organization" of preexisting matter.

Famously, Joseph Smith would in 1844 preach a sermon that would cement the theological status for Mormons of the idea of God's creative act as an act of *organization*.¹⁸ As noted above, it has long been suggested that Smith was influenced by Thomas Dick's *The Philosophy of a Future State*. In that work, a copy of which was available to both Pratt and Smith, Dick had described Creation as an act of "organization" of preexisting matter: "Besides the magnificence and variety of the material structures which exist throughout the universe, *the organized and intelligent beings with which they are peopled* present a vast field of delightful contemplation."¹⁹ But what has not been noticed is the extent to which Dick himself had throughout his career appealed to Milton in his exuberant account of divine Creation and the likelihood of multiple worlds.

Milton's presence in Dick's later *Sidereal Heavens* is surely most pronounced, as the poet's astronomy and metaphysics are cited explicitly at least five times. *Paradise Lost*, Dick explained, "seems to be almost prophetic" in its understanding of the truth of plural worlds, as in this oft-cited passage from book 8:

Other suns perhaps
With their attendant moons thou wilt descry
Communicating male and female light,
Which two great sexes animate the world,
Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live.²⁰ (*PL* 8.148–52)

The existence of "some that live" on distant orbs, for readers like Dick and Pratt, testifies not only to the conviction of alternate worlds but to the fact of the self-existent matter from which those worlds were created. Dick's *Sidereal Heavens* had suggested that God had but "organized all the tribes of animated existence."²¹ And in a remarkable sentence in *The Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter*, Pratt weaves together Dick's sense of Creation as the "organization" of preexisting materials, Milton's account of multiple worlds "with their attendant moons," and Milton's Job-inspired description in the Nativity ode of the joyous hymning of the heavenly choir: "When in the progress of the endless works of Deity, the full time had arrived for infinite wisdom to organize this sphere, and its attendant worlds...when first the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy...all was pronounced very good." It is in this bricolage of fragments from John Milton and Thomas Dick that Pratt inaugurates in print, in the 1840 pamphlet, the central Mormon doctrine of God's "organizational" creation of the universe from existing materials.

It was Dick's penchant for a scientifically inflected theology that had drawn him to the astronomy and natural philosophy expounded by Milton's narrating archangel Raphael in *Paradise Lost*. Dick was especially taken with Raphael's account of the refined homogeneity of the spiritualized matter constituting the bodies of angels: "All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear, / All intellect, all sense" (*PL* 6.350–51). It is just such a spiritualized,

integrated body to which men and women could look forward at their resurrection at the Last Judgment, according to Dick in *The Philosophy of the Future*: a body "refined to the highest pitch of which matter is susceptible, . . . endued with organs of perception of a more exquisite and sublime nature than those with which it is now furnished."²² For humans at the resurrection will attain to angelhood, as Dick makes clear in his imperfect quotations of Milton's Raphael in *Philosophy of a Future State*: in "becom[ing] 'all eye, all ear, all ethereal and divine feeling,'"²³ they will be transmuted to those celestial creatures who are "'full of eyes,' that is endowed with 'all sense, all intellect, all consciousness; turning their attention every way; beholding at once all things within the reach of their understandings.'"²⁴ In the work of the prolific Scottish clergyman, the early Mormon theologians were presented with a compelling authorization of Milton's poem as a source of true knowledge not only about the science of spiritualized matter or the existence of other worlds, but about the yet more daring soteriology of humankind's progressive ascent to ever higher states of being.

Like Thomas Dick before him, and like his own brother Orson Pratt after him, Parley Pratt also honored as a source of indisputable truth Milton's recently discovered *De doctrina Christiana*. The English divine Charles Sumner had correlated in the extensive footnotes to his English translation of that work, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, all of Milton's heterodox musings about the nature of matter—especially matter's inextricability from spirit or soul—with their corresponding articulations in the blank verse of *Paradise Lost*. And the American William Ellery Channing would in the following year cite all those materialist metaphysical passages of Milton's epic again, in his influential work describing Milton's heresies. Accounting for the materialism of both epic and treatise, Channing emphasized the importance for Milton of the divine origin of physical substance. Milton was committed, he explained, to "tracing matter to the Deity as its fountain."²⁵ The lines of Milton's poem most notable in this regard, for both Sumner and Channing, were Raphael's account of the upward tending movement of the material world, which was

Created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spiritous, and pure. (PL 5.471–75)

In an explanation of the “various degrees / Of substance” that make up the universe, the element we call “spirit” is considered by Raphael just another manifestation of matter, a form of substance “more refined, more spirituous, and pure” than the condensed material we call “body.”

By 1843 Joseph Smith, prompted perhaps by Pratt, would begin to rely on Milton’s specific articulations of the metaphysics of matter and spirit. “There is no such thing as immaterial matter,” Smith would write, in what I take to be a focused, if unde-liberate, appropriation of Raphael’s account of spirit in book 5 of *Paradise Lost* as “more refined, more spiritous, and pure” matter. Reproducing Raphael’s ontology of spirit as a “more refined . . . and pure” body, Smith explains that “all spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure.”²⁶ It is just this Miltonic formulation of a monistic union of body and spirit, which Smith repeated in an important sermon in 1844 and elsewhere, that would eventually establish itself as Mormon doctrine.²⁷ In the treatise on *The Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter* written some years earlier, Pratt does not yet fully embrace Milton’s monistic identification of matter with spirit. Opening the work with a claim about those two principles that echoes the rhetorical structure of Raphael’s account of the “two great sexes [that] animate the world,” Pratt appears cautiously to allow them a separate identity: “Matter and Spirit are the two great principles of all existence. Every thing animate and inanimate is composed of one or the other, or both of these eternal principles.” But Pratt does make the claim in that treatise, in a passage that may well have influenced Smith, that the “elements” of matter and spirit, of which everything was made at the Creation, had always existed, and were of “eternal duration.”²⁸ This important concept, too, I want to suggest, has a strong Miltonic foundation, though not, as we will see, one based on one of John Milton’s actual beliefs.

Milton, we know, flouted orthodoxy in *De doctrina* by denying the possibility of God's creation of the world *ex nihilo*, since, as he explained, "both Scripture and reason concur in pronouncing that [the world]... was made, not out of nothing, but out of matter." What, then, was the origin of this matter from which God created the world? Milton appeals to logic in answering this question, stating that "matter must either have always existed independently of God, or have originated from God at some particular point of time."²⁹ Of these two options, Milton will of course select the latter, the creation *ex deo*, going further to imply that it was the divine derivation of matter that guaranteed the freedom and essential goodness of all created things. But Milton stumbles in explaining why the former option, of matter's eternal independence of God, must be excluded; he suggests, quite simply, that the idea that matter "should have existed of itself from all eternity, is inconceivable."³⁰ Milton's translator, Sumner, joins Milton in dismissing as absurd the idea of preexisting matter, reminding us that in *Paradise Lost* it is Satan alone who mounts an argument for an *ex materia* theory of angelic creation: "The opinion that angels were not created, but self-existent, is with great propriety attributed to Satan in *Paradise Lost*."³¹ But Pratt, and Smith after him, will soon come to lay great store by the "inconceivable" opinion, firmly identified with the dangerous metaphysics of Milton's Satan, that the stuff of which creation sprung preexisted God's act of creation. Arriving at their boldly heterodox theory of Creation by means of an antithetical reading of Milton, Pratt and Smith will even use Sumner's term for Satan's heresy, "self-existence," to name the doctrine that matter is eternal, and that it had to have existed before Creation could take place.³²

As the title of Pratt's treatise suggests, it is just this doctrine of the uncreated, self-existent, "eternal duration" of matter that for him is the great secret of Creation, and the truth most necessary to preach to his Mormon readers. The great distance of this position from anything to be considered normative Christianity cannot be overemphasized. It is in this very period that the idea of eternal material self-existence would be seen as the conceptual

foundation of atheism. In an 1842 article in Charles Southwell's avowedly atheist journal, *The Oracle of Reason, or Philosophy Vindicated*, the notion of material self-existence would be celebrated: "The eternity of matter precludes the idea of the creation of matter, which is at least a tacit acknowledgment that matter is self-existent. Self-existent matter is the grand dogma of materialism, whence Atheism results as a matter of course."³³ For the committed atheist Southwell, who continually confronted the threat of imprisonment for his regular violations of the blasphemy ordinance, any concept of matter's eternal duration made logically inevitable the conclusion that there was no God. The assertion of matter's self-existence was in no way a safely pious position for the Mormon Pratt to assume.

Why then, for the non-atheist Pratt, was the potentially blasphemous doctrine of the eternal duration of matter—a position he might have generated by means of a shockingly credulous reading of Milton's Satan in book 5 of the epic—so important? What problem does this extreme metaphysical position appear to solve? Pratt explains his desire to offer Jews, Muslims, pagans, and "Modern Christians" a "just and correct knowledge on this all-important subject" of the afterlife. "Who does not desire," he asks, "to become acquainted as far as possible with the nature of that eternal state of existence to which we are all hastening?" To fulfill that goal, which is for him nothing less than a matter of life and death, Pratt turns to the opening lines of Genesis and offers a new reading of Moses's claim that "In the beginning God made (or formed) the heavens and the earth."³⁴ Everywhere concerned to disabuse his readers of any wrong-headed thinking about Creation, Pratt explains that, although many readers of the Bible "have gathered the idea that God created all things out of nonentity," or nothing, the truth is that the matter and spirit from which God created the universe had always been there: "matter as well as spirit is eternal, uncreated, self-existing." It can be neither created nor annihilated. And while "empires may fall to ruin, and moulder to the dust and be forgotten," the elements of which those empires were formed are eternal: "revolutions and convulsions of nature will only serve

to refine, purify, and finally restore and renew the elements upon which they act."³⁵

There are moments, to be sure, in which Pratt's explanation of the promised redemption from the effects of the Fall can sound conventional. The Savior died, we learn in a brief sentence, "to redeem man in a moral sense, from his lost and fallen state." But for Pratt the real work of Christ exceeds the improvement of fallen human morality. First and foremost, Pratt explains, "Christ died for the earth itself," not because the earth surpasses the men and women on it in importance, but because men and women are themselves inescapably physical—earthly—beings. It is for our sake that the most significant effects of the redemption pertain to the physical creation, as Christ works "to restore the physical world from all the effects of the fall; to purify the elements; and to present the earth in spotless purity, before the throne of God, clothed in celestial glory, as a fit inheritance for the ransomed throng who are destined to inherit it in eternity."³⁶

Because the elements of creation are eternal, and because our fleshly constitution will persist, particle for particle, from this life to the afterlife, we are all the beneficiaries of the redemption of creation's elements. The "physical difference" between our mortal and our immortal bodies is exactly that "difference between the mortal body of Jesus Christ and his resurrected body": "They are both the same flesh, the same bones, the same joints, the same sinews, the same skin, the same hair, the same likeness, or physical features, and the same element, or matter." The minor difference, Pratt explains, involves the substance that once flowed in Christ's veins: his former, mortal body "was quickened by the principles of the natural life, which was the blood, and the latter is quickened solely by the spirit, and not by blood, and therefore is not subject unto death, but lives forevermore." "Modern Christians," according to Pratt, cling to a pernicious belief about the afterlife, one informed by a fundamental misunderstanding of the ontology of matter and spirit: "they suppose that the whole will become spirit unconnected with matter, and soar away to worlds on high, free from all the elements of which their nature was composed in this life."³⁷ But in the powerfully materialist Mormon soteriology

that Pratt is committing for the first time to print, the bodily person remains wholly bodily, not to dwell forever in heaven but ultimately to live within the same flesh and the same bones on an inescapably physical earth over which Christ will reign. The fully corporeal Mormon self endures intact from this life to the next: the human being's fundamentally physical identity as an individual enjoys in the afterlife, at something like the molecular level, an eternal duration, in body no less than in spirit.

The stakes of Pratt's argument could not be higher. Without a proper understanding of the metaphysics of matter and spirit, Pratt makes clear throughout the treatise, humankind cannot be adequately prepared to confront Christ at the Last Judgment (for all individuals "are to be judged according to their own individual deeds done in the body"); nor can human beings fully understand the blessings that await them as perfected physical beings, living on a perfected physical world, joined bodily, "in that holy city . . . upon that very planet that first gave [them] being," by their equally bodily loved ones.³⁸ Early Mormonism was, like so many of the new American sects of the early nineteenth century, powerfully millenarian. And Pratt finds it likely that many—"tens of thousands," he conjectures—will be rapt up to heaven soon, as Enoch and Elijah were, "who never tasted death, but were changed instantaneously from mortal to immortal, and were caught up into the heavens, both body and spirit." But those tens of thousands of virtuous souls fortunate to be present at the Second Coming will arrive at "this inconceivable fullness and consummation of eternal life and happiness without tasting death" only if they are properly taught the metaphysical principles of the eternal duration of matter, principles that "must necessarily . . . become a conspicuous part of modern theology."³⁹ The proper understanding of the animist materialist constitution of the physical world is a crucial feature, Pratt will suggest throughout the treatise, of our preparation for the Last Judgment. A full cognitive understanding of the new Mormon metaphysics of the eternal duration of matter, and of the eternal duration of our insistent bodily, terrestrial selves, is an inescapable aspect of our preparation for the world to come.

As Benjamin E. Park and Terryl L. Givens have suggested, the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith would shortly assume many of the bold new theological positions staked out in Pratt's examination of the *Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter*. We have seen how Pratt had himself creatively appropriated the theological materials he had found in Milton and in a Milton-steeped contemporary such as Thomas Dick. That some of the most exciting speculations of early Mormonism emerged as a fresh pastiche of earlier ideas that had themselves been borrowed was a fact, I want to suggest, fully consonant with the main conceptual outlines of Mormonism's theory of creation. Words, images, ideas can be seen as the literary corollary of the self-existent, eternally enduring particles of matter that the Mormon God used to *organize* creation.

Joseph Smith recognized the deeper pattern of creation that underlay both the patchwork nature of Mormonism's intellectual history and the cosmic history of God's inescapably belated organization and reorganization of preexisting materials. In 1841, Smith would make public his theory that the "earth was organized or formed out of other planets which were broke up and remodelled and made into the one on which we live."⁴⁰ Our planet was formed out of the fragments of earlier planets that had broken up, and ours will itself be broken up in turn, to be remodeled anew by another God, perhaps, in another age. In his vivid amplification of Pratt's theory of a divine creation *ex materia*, Smith offered the perfect emblem of the appropriative creative activity of the first generation of Mormon theologians. The bold materialist figurations of John Milton, in the already indebted works of cultural reassembly that are *Paradise Lost* and *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, can surely be seen as literary instances of the existing shards from which the Mormon God created the earth. The fragments of broken planet that the seventeenth century English writer bequeathed in his poetry and prose found their creative reorganization as the new planet of Mormonism in the other world of nineteenth century America.⁴¹

NOTES

1. John Durham Peters, "Reflections on Mormon Materialism," *Sunstone* 16 (March 1993): 47. Let me also acknowledge Peters for the valuable suggestions he made on an earlier draft of this essay.

2. *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon, upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*, trans. Joseph Smith (Palmyra, 1830), Mosiah 3:19, 2 Nephi 2:28–29. See Benjamin E. Park, "Salvation through a Tabernacle: Joseph Smith, Parley Pratt, and Early Mormon Theologies of Embodiment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43, no. 2 (2010): 5.

3. Pratt's treatise *The Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter* first appeared in print in January 1840, in Pratt's *The Millennium and Other Poems: To which Is Annexed a Treatise on the Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter* (New York, 1840 [copyright 1839]). I follow Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow in dating Pratt's composition of the treatise to his imprisonment in 1838. See their *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (Oxford, 2011), 170.

4. Fawn Brodie, in her controversial 1945 biography of Joseph Smith, *No Man Knows My History* (New York, 1995), 171–72, first traced the intellectual connection between Dick's *The Philosophy of a Future State*, published in Glasgow in 1829 and Philadelphia in 1836, and Joseph Smith's *Book of Abraham*. Brodie noted that the early Mormon leader Sidney Rigdon had quoted from *The Philosophy of a Future State* in *Latter-Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* (November 1836): 422–23. See Terryl L. Givens, *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought* (Oxford, 2014), 8.

5. For a more extensive treatment of Milton's popularity in early nineteenth century America, see my essay, "Latter-day Milton," in *Immortality and the Body in the Age of Milton*, ed. Stephen M. Fallon and John Rumrich (Cambridge, forthcoming).

6. Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 220.

7. See Elizabeth Hannon, "The Influence of *Paradise Lost* on the Hymns of Charles Wesley" (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1985).

8. A modern edition of Wesley's later eighteenth century abridgement is *Milton for the Methodists: Emphasized Extracts from "Paradise Lost," Selected, Edited, and Annotated by John Wesley* (London, 1988). See John Shawcross's entry on "Adaptions, Literary," in *A Milton Encyclopedia*, ed. William B. Hunter, 9 vols. (Lewisburg, Pa., 1978–83), 1:21–22.

9. Eliza W. Bradburn, *The Story of "Paradise Lost," for Children* (Portland, Maine, 1830).

10. William Ellery Channing, *Remarks on the Character and Writings of John Milton; Occasioned by the Publication of His Lately Discovered Treatise on Christian Doctrine* (Boston, 1826).

11. John Rogers, "Orson Pratt, Parley Pratt, and the Miltonic Origins of Mormon Materialism," in *Milton, Materialism, and Embodiment: "One First Matter All,"* ed. Kevin J. Donovan and Thomas Festa, 157–88 (Pittsburgh, 2017).

12. See, for example, "Polygamy," *Christian Magazine, Conducted by Members of Mendon Association*, 3, no. 6 (1826): 178. There Channing is taken to task for his failure fully to censure Milton: "it is too evident, from what he [Channing] has written, that he is either deplorably ignorant of the New Testament, or deplorably deficient in respect for its holy precepts."

13. Pratt, *Regeneration and Eternal Duration*, 53.

14. All citations from Milton's poetry are taken from *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York, 2007), and are cited parenthetically by line number in the text.

15. Pratt, *Regeneration and Eternal Duration*, 56.

16. It is not until line 152 of Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* that the poet acknowledges that it is the sacrifice on the "bitter cross," and not Christ's birth or the sublime song of the heavenly choir, that will lay the foundation for the redemption of humankind from the effects of the Fall.

17. See Thomas Dick, *The Sidereal Heavens and Other Subjects Connected with Astronomy* (New York, 1840), 296:

In the representations given in the sacred records of the exercises of superior beings, they are exhibited as uttering articulate sounds, and joining in the harmonies of music. When a multitude of angels descended on the plains of Bethlehem to announce the birth of Messiah to the shepherds, they uttered articulate sounds, and joined in musical strains which struck the ears of the shepherds, and conveyed a distinct impression of the meaning of the sentiments communicated; which circumstances leads us to conclude, that superior intelligences in other regions express sentiments and emotions in a manner somewhat similar to that in which we hold intercourse with one another, by the faculties of speech and hearing.

18. Smith preached the sermon on the occasion of the death of the Mormon elder King Follett. For a partial text of the extemporaneously delivered sermon, which a small group of followers committed to paper, see Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 193–208.

19. Dick, *Philosophy of a Future State*, 211.

20. Dick, *Sidereal Heavens*, 129. On Dick's lifelong interest in "astronomical plurality," see Erich Robert Paul, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* (Urbana, Ill., 1992), 82.

21. *Ibid.*, 294. Some two years earlier, in *Celestial Scenery; or, The Wonders of the Planetary System Displayed* (New York, 1838), Dick had similarly described Creation as God's "organization" of preexisting materials (113, 169, 374, 381–83). See Joseph Smith's *Book of Abraham* 3:22. Smith, we are told, "translated" *Abraham* in 1835, but it wasn't published until it emerged serially in *Times and Seasons* (March 1842).

22. Dick, *Philosophy of a Future State*, 127. See also Dick's Miltonic description of the angel body on 217.

23. *Ibid.*, 97–98.

24. *Ibid.*, 214. Thomas Dick would come to be even more closely associated with the metaphysics of *Paradise Lost*. In a midcentury edition of Milton's epic, edited by Reverend James Robert Boyd (New York, 1851), 335, Thomas Dick would be praised for the acuity with which he engages with Raphael's account of "other worlds" in book 8, another of Pratt's favorite passages from Milton's poem: "The subject here introduced, namely, the peopling of other worlds besides our own with intelligent and sensitive beings, has been discussed with great minuteness of detail and ability by Dr. Thomas Dick in his 'Celestial Scenery,' and in a more recent work on the 'Sidereal Heavens.'"

25. Channing, *Remarks*, 37.

26. See Joseph Smith, *Doctrines and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Containing Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, the Prophet with Some Additions by His Successors in the Presidency of the Church*, 131:7–8, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints website, <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/131> (accessed July 4, 2016). Smith's shocking doctrine of the coeternality of man, or "intelligence," with God is established in section 93 of *Doctrine and Covenants*.

27. For a discussion of Smith's other pronouncements on the refined, pure matter known as "spirit," see Benjamin E. Park, "The Great God, the Divine Mind, and the Ideal Absolute," *Claremont Journal of Mormon Studies* 1 (2011): 37.

28. Pratt, *Regeneration and Eternal Duration*, 48.

29. John Milton, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, trans. Charles Sumner (London, 1825), 237.

30. *Ibid.*, 237.

31. *Ibid.*, 245n.

32. I offer a more elaborate treatment of the Mormon interest in the philosophy of Milton's Satan in "Latter-day Milton" and in "Orson Pratt, Parley Pratt."

33. Charles Southwell, *Oracle of Reason, or Philosophy Vindicated* 19 (1842): n.p.

34. Pratt, *Regeneration and Eternal Duration*, 49.

35. *Ibid.*, 49, 2, 51.

36. *Ibid.*, 57, 56.

11. John Rogers, "Orson Pratt, Parley Pratt, and the Miltonic Origins of Mormon Materialism," in *Milton, Materialism, and Embodiment: "One First Matter All,"* ed. Kevin J. Donovan and Thomas Festa, 157–88 (Pittsburgh, 2017).

12. See, for example, "Polygamy," *Christian Magazine, Conducted by Members of Mendon Association*, 3, no. 6 (1826): 178. There Channing is taken to task for his failure fully to censure Milton: "it is too evident, from what he [Channing] has written, that he is either deplorably ignorant of the New Testament, or deplorably deficient in respect for its holy precepts."

13. Pratt, *Regeneration and Eternal Duration*, 53.

14. All citations from Milton's poetry are taken from *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York, 2007), and are cited parenthetically by line number in the text.

15. Pratt, *Regeneration and Eternal Duration*, 56.

16. It is not until line 152 of Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* that the poet acknowledges that it is the sacrifice on the "bitter cross," and not Christ's birth or the sublime song of the heavenly choir, that will lay the foundation for the redemption of humankind from the effects of the Fall.

17. See Thomas Dick, *The Sidereal Heavens and Other Subjects Connected with Astronomy* (New York, 1840), 296:

In the representations given in the sacred records of the exercises of superior beings, they are exhibited as uttering articulate sounds, and joining in the harmonies of music. When a multitude of angels descended on the plains of Bethlehem to announce the birth of Messiah to the shepherds, they uttered articulate sounds, and joined in musical strains which struck the ears of the shepherds, and conveyed a distinct impression of the meaning of the sentiments communicated; which circumstances leads us to conclude, that superior intelligences in other regions express sentiments and emotions in a manner somewhat similar to that in which we hold intercourse with one another, by the faculties of speech and hearing.

18. Smith preached the sermon on the occasion of the death of the Mormon elder King Follett. For a partial text of the extemporaneously delivered sermon, which a small group of followers committed to paper, see Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 193–208.

19. Dick, *Philosophy of a Future State*, 211.

20. Dick, *Sidereal Heavens*, 129. On Dick's lifelong interest in "astronomical plurality," see Erich Robert Paul, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* (Urbana, Ill., 1992), 82.

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25. Channing, *Remarks*, 37.

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35. *Ibid.*, 49, 2, 51.

36. *Ibid.*, 57, 56.

37. *Ibid.*, 59, 48.

38. *Ibid.*, 57.

39. *Ibid.*, 60–61.

40. Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 5, 1841, in *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cooks (Provo, 1980), 60; cited in Park, "Salvation through a Tabernacle," 12.

41. Park, "Salvation through a Tabernacle," 36n, describes the intellectual "*modus operandi* of early Mormonism's vision: Joseph Smith seldom accepted or rejected theological ideas wholesale; rather, he incorporated bits and pieces while ignoring others in his attempt to gather 'fragments' of truth to buttress his religious vision." Givens, *Wrestling the Angel*, 40, similarly suggests that Smith's "prophetic vocation...involved visions, borrowings, re-workings, collaborations, incorporations, and pronouncements, with false starts, second-guessings, and self-revisions."