Extending the concept of the eternal nature of matter to the substance of spirit, Joseph Smith revealed, "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter" (D&C 131:7–8).

Parley P. Pratt, an apostle and close associate of Joseph Smith, wrote, "Matter and spirit are the two great principles of all existence. Everything animate and inanimate is composed of one or the other, or both of these eternal principles. . . . Matter and spirit are of equal duration; both are self-existent, they never began to exist, and they never can be annihilated. . . . Matter as well as spirit is eternal, uncreated, self-existing. However infinite the variety of its changes, forms and shapes; . . . eternity is inscribed in indelible characters on every particle" (HC 4:55).

In strict analogy to principles governing physical matter, the revelations to Joseph Smith stress that eternity for spirits also derives from the eternal existence of spiritual matter or elements. The preeminent manifestation of the eternal nature of both physical and spiritual matter is found in the eternal existence of God and ultimately his human children as discrete, indestructible entities. In this unique LDS doctrine, matter in all of its many forms, instead of occupying a subordinate role relative to philosophical paradigms, assumes a sovereign position, along with the principles and laws governing its properties and characteristics.

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DAVID M. GRANT

MATTHEW, GOSPEL OF

Latter-day Saints consider the Gospel of Matthew as the preeminent introduction to the New Testament. The Gospel of Matthew is reproduced and revised in LDS scripture more than any other biblical text except the Genesis creation account. It is edited throughout in the Prophet Joseph Smith’s inspired revision of the Bible (see JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE [JST]), and the edited version of Matthew 24 is reproduced in the Pearl of Great Price (JS—M 1:1–55). The Sermon on the Mount is virtually repeated in the Book of Mormon by the resurrected Savior to his "other sheep" (John 10:16; 3 Ne. 15:21) in the Western Hemisphere (3 Ne. 12–14); but it is made explicit that it is the poor in spirit who come unto him who are blessed; and it is implied that blessedness comes to all other categories mentioned in the beatitudes by the same means (3 Ne. 12:2–12). The Doctrine and Covenants provides an explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares in a latter-day context (D&C 86). Each rendition is easily recognized as basically the same sermon. However, the inspired changes are significant to Latter-day Saints, as they often establish or support major points of doctrine.

Latter-day Saints, like many others, equate Levi and Matthew, acknowledging the "publican" apostle as author of the gospel (Matt. 9:9). As a Jew, Matthew saw Christianity as the culmination of Judaism, with Jesus as the promised Messiah. In many details of Jesus’ life, Matthew saw fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (see JESUS CHRIST IN THE SCRIPTURES), and the JST enriches the Matthew theme that all this was done “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets” (Matt. 2:23; cf. Millet, 1985, pp. 152–54). Through a royal line, beginning with Abraham, Matthew establishes Jesus’ Davidic ancestry (Matt. 1:1–17) and his right to reign as "king of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37); and he relates the nativity story from Joseph’s viewpoint (Matt. 1:18–25; Matt. 2:1–25). The Prophet Joseph Smith adds that Jesus grew up with his brethren and waited for his ministry to come, serving under his "father," and “needed not that any man should teach him” (JST Matt. 3:24–25).

Many scriptures note that the Messiah will be “like unto Moses” (Deut. 18:15–19; Moses 1:6; 1 Ne. 22:20–21; Acts 7:37; JS—H I 1:40), and in the Matthew account readers see parallels between some of the experiences of Moses and Jesus: There was a sovereign who slew children, a return from Egypt, forty days on a mountain, and the miraculous feeding of multitudes. Most of all, there was an enunciation of divine law by both. The promised similitude, however, may have established expectations in Jewish hearts that Jesus failed to satisfy.

To Latter-day Saints, the Sermon on the Mount is a concise summary of much of Jesus’ teaching, emphasizing the spirit of the law and encouraging righteous acts for righteous reasons. They recognize it as a single discourse of Jesus in light of his complete repetition of it among the Nephites (3 Ne. 12–14). Both the JST and 3 Nephi
versions include enriching details not found in extent biblical texts, including the setting of the sermon. For example, Jesus directed only his chosen twelve and other selected disciples to take no thought for their life or for the morrow (3 Ne. 13:25) and to teach from house to house, noting that while the world will persecute them, their Heavenly Father will provide for them (JST Matt. 6:2, 25–27). Then he turned to the multitude and warned of unrighteous judgment (3 Ne. 14:1). Latter-day Saints acknowledge the necessity of good judgment and seek to judge righteously (see JST Matt. 7:2; cf. Moro. 7:15–19).

The JST revision of Matthew is replete with subtle but meaningful differences from the King James text. It becomes clear, for instance, that Jesus entered the Judean wilderness primarily to commune with his Father, not merely to be tempted (JST Matt. 4:1–2), and, unswayed by any doubt of his divinity as the One foretold by the prophets, he called his apostles (JST Matt. 4:18). JST Matthew 17:14 introduces a latter-day Elias: “Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist, and also of another who should come and restore all things, as it is written by the prophets.” A doctrinal principle is strengthened when Jesus declares that he came to save the lost, but little children need no repentance (JST Matt. 18:2, 19:13; cf. Moro. 8:5–24).

Latter-day Saints recognize the importance of faith, good works, and ordinances, and do not stress one above the others, as all are essential for salvation. They draw support from Matthew's many references to faith and good works (e.g., Matt. 16:27), and they recognize the ordinances of BAPTISM by immersion (Matt. 3:16; JST Matt. 3:44–45), ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD (Matt. 10:1), and healing of the sick (Matt. 9:18). In addition, they believe that Jesus established a formal church organization under the supervision of his ordained apostles, and they cite the Matthean text both for Jesus’ intent to establish a church (Matt. 16:18) and for the existence of the Church (Matt. 18:17; cf. Millet, 1995, pp. 49–51). At Caesarea Philippi, when Peter declared Christ’s divinity (Matt. 16:15), Jesus affirmed that he knew this only through revelation from the Father, noting, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church” (Matt. 16:17–18). While Mormons acknowledge Peter’s primacy in the early Church, they quickly point out that Christ’s Church—both in Peter’s day and in the latter days—was and is founded upon the rock of revelation and that living prophets still look to that rock for guidance.

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WM. REVELL PHILLIPS

MCKAY, DAVID O.

David O. McKay (1873–1970), sustained as the ninth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 9, 1951, served as a General Authority for nearly sixty-four years, longer than any other person in Church history. During that time he served as a counselor in the First Presidency for seventeen years and was President for nearly nineteen years. He is remembered for his contributions to education, his exemplary family life, his emphasis on missionary work, his humanitarianism, his practical advice on achieving a happy life, and his participation in civic affairs, and for leading the Church toward increased internationalism.

The third child of David and Jennette Evans McKay, David Oman McKay was born in Huntsville, Utah, on September 8, 1873. While growing up on his father’s farm, he faced tragedy and privation much earlier than many children. When he was six, his two older sisters died, and just a year later, his father was called on a two-year mission to his native Scotland. Young David matured quickly when he was left to help his mother care for the farm and the family, which included a younger brother and two younger sisters, one a two-year-old and the other a baby girl born ten days after his father left. The enterprising family, with the help of neighbors, had realized enough profit to surprise their father and husband with a much-needed addition to the house when he returned from his mission.

Young David continued to attend school, work on the farm, and, during the summer, deliver the Ogden Standard Examiner to a nearby mining town. He had an insatiable hunger for learning, and during his round trips on horseback, he spent