

blessing. And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the Prince, the Archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him, I have set thee to be at the head—a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them for ever. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation, and notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. These things are all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time.”—*Doctrine and Covenants*, cvii. 53-57.

The peculiar regard for Adam manifested in Mormon theology, coupled with the terms in which he has been mentioned by some of their authorities, has given rise to the popular idea that Adam is really identified with God. Thus, as frequently urged by hostile critics, President Young once said that Adam is “our father and our God,” also, “the only God with whom we have to do.” Whether or not Young actually intended to convey the ideas that his words suggest, or merely did not realize the possible connotation of his words, it is altogether certain that the Mormon Church holds to no doctrine by which Adam is represented as anyone other than a being eternally inferior to God the Father. Undoubtedly this alleged doctrine of Mormonism, which mean minds have ruthlessly advertised, without any investigation whatever, is, like other “obnoxious doctrines,” ascribed to this system, more properly a matter of words than of ideas. As we shall see later, this identical situation is involved in the use of the word “gods” in this theology; thus giving the wanton enemies of this Church the opportunity to accuse it of teaching polytheism, which is very far from the truth of the matter, as must be acknowledged in the simple cause of justice, truth-telling, and intelligence. It is an excellent thing to investigate sufficiently to discover what a man really says, or a system really teaches, before proceeding to condemn it for “harmful errors.” The allegation in regard to the alleged “Adam-God doctrine” is thus discussed in a letter, under date Feb. 20, 1912, addressed by the First Presidency of the Church to one of its missionaries, who, as it seems, had been reproached with this doctrine by opponents:

“You speak of the ‘assertion made by Brigham Young that Jesus was begotten of the Father in the flesh by our father Adam, and that Adam is the father of Jesus Christ and not the Holy Ghost,’ and you say that Elders are challenged by certain critics to prove this.

“If you will carefully examine the sermon to which you refer, in the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. I., you will discover that, while President Young denied that Jesus was ‘begotten by the Holy Ghost,’ he did not affirm, in so many words, that ‘Adam is the father of Jesus Christ in the flesh.’ He said, ‘Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden and who is our Father in Heaven.’ Who is our ‘Father in Heaven’? Here is what

President Young said about him: 'Our Father in Heaven begat all the spirits that ever were or ever will be upon this earth, and they were born spirits in the eternal world. Then the Lord by his power and wisdom organized the mortal tabernacle of man.' Was He in the Garden of Eden? Surely He gave commandments to Adam and Eve; He was their Father in Heaven; they worshipped Him, and taught their children after the fall to worship and obey Him, in the name of the Son who was to come.

"But President Young went on to show that our father Adam,—that is, our earthly father,—the progenitor of the race of men, stands at our head, being 'Michael the Archangel, the Ancient of Days,' and that he was not fashioned from earth like an adobe, but begotten by his Father in Heaven. Adam is called in the Bible 'the Son of God' (Luke iii. 38). It was our Father in Heaven who begat the spirit of him who was 'the Firstborn' of all the spirits that come to this earth, and who was also his Father by the Virgin Mary, making him the 'Only Begotten in the flesh.' Read Luke i. 26-35. Where is Jesus called the 'Only Begotten of the Holy Ghost'? He is always singled out as the 'Only Begotten of the Father.' . . . The Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and her conception was under that influence, even of the spirit of life; our Father in Heaven was the Father of the Son of Mary, to whom the Savior prayed, as did our earthly father Adam.

"When President Young asked, 'Who is the Father?' he was speaking of Adam as the father of our earthly bodies, who is at our head, as revealed in Doctrine and Covenants, Section cvii, verses 53-56. In that sense he is one of the gods referred to in numerous scriptures, and particularly by Christ (John x, 34-36). He is the great Patriarch, the Ancient of Days, who will stand in his place as 'a Prince over us forever,' and with whom we shall 'have to do,' as each family will have to do with its head, according to the holy patriarchal order. Our father Adam, perfected and glorified as a god, will be the being who will carry out the behests of the great Elohim in relation to his posterity (Daniel vii. 9-14).

"While, as Paul puts it, 'there be gods many and lords many (whether in heaven or in earth), unto us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things.' The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints worships Him, and Him alone, who is the Father of Jesus Christ, whom He worshipped, whom Adam worshipped, and who is God the Eternal Father of us all."

Although, as must be admitted in all honesty, this statement is a perfectly candid and straightforward presentation of the Mormon position on this much discussed issue, it is, nevertheless, difficult to make the matter entirely clear to a non-Mormon mind. It must be said, therefore, that the position of Adam, even as stated in Brigham Young's much-discussed remark, is merely a corollary, and a very logical one, of the exalted idea of the sacredness of organization held among the Mormons, rather than of any tendency to deify a man. It is their belief that the organization of their Church is merely a duplicate of the organization of the universe of spirits. Thus, in discussing the doctrine of the Godhead, it is not uncommon to hear mention of the "Great Presidency in Heaven," which, like the Presidency of

the Church on earth, is composed of Three Personages. The "federal headship" of Adam, therefore, involves that he is a factor in a great organization, which is composed of all the spirits of mankind, who exist on earth, or who have already existed. In this capacity, he discharges his functions as the first and foremost holder of the Priesthood on earth. Since, also, "when the keys of Gospel ordinances are revealed from heaven, it is by Adam's authority," there is an involved suggestion that the holders of priestly authority are, in a sense, personally under his direction. B. H. Roberts explains the matter as follows:

"The Scriptures represent in many places the existence of a plurality of divine personages, how many we do not know, and it does not matter. But we hear of God saying, 'Let us make man in our image'; 'the man has become as one of us, knowing good and evil'; 'God standeth in the congregation of the Mighty, he judgeth among the Gods' . . . 'I have said Ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the most High.' The last a passage of the Psalms, quoted and defended by the Savior as a justification of his own claim to sonship with God. And now, if the great archangel, Michael, or Adam, is among that number of exalted, divine souls, what more fitting than that the father of the human race shall become the great presiding patriarch of our earth and its redeemed inhabitants; and the one with whom our race would most immediately have to do? What sacrilege is there in this thought? Is it not reasonable that it should be so?"—*Answer to the Ministerial Association Review*, p. 17.

In accord with the "patriarchal" concept of the government of the universe, the "fall" of man, as already seen, was an integral part of the divine plan for man's exaltation. Thus, the view that it was a distinct benefit reaches its height in the following passage from the Pearl of Great Price:

"And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God. "And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgressions we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient."—*Moses v. 10-11.*

The expressions so far given very closely suggest that this accepted teaching on the "fall" is quite in harmony with the findings of current optimism in theology and life. This is not wholly true, however, since the fact of Adam's sin and the need of an atonement are in no sense lost to sight.

Continuing the discussion of the atonement given in a former quotation, Roberts proceeds as follows:

"But Adam did sin. He did break the law, which is sin, and violation of law involves the violator in its penalties, as surely as effect follows cause. Upon this principle depends the dignity and majesty of law. Take this fact away from moral government and your moral laws