

## 10. The Adam-God Doctrine

The Adam-God doctrine was a natural outgrowth of the doctrine of a plurality of Gods. Although this doctrine was not publicly taught until 1852, Adam was held in high esteem at the very beginning of the Mormon Church.

### Falling Upward

The Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe made this statement concerning Adam and Eve:

In Joseph Smith's philosophy of existence Adam and Eve were raised to a foremost place among the children of men, second only to the Savior. Their act was to be acclaimed. They were the greatest figures of the ages. The so-called "fall" became a **necessary, honorable** act in carrying out the plan of the Almighty. (*Joseph Smith—Seeker After Truth*, p. 160)

The Book of Mormon contains this statement: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 2:25). In Joseph Smith's production "The Book of Moses," we read the following:

And in that day Adam blessed God...and began to prophesy . . . 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, . . . was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression 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. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 5:10-11)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth President of the Church in 1970, made these statements:

The fall of man came as a blessing in disguise, . . . I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin . . . it is not always a sin to transgress a law. . . .

We can hardly look upon anything resulting in such benefits as being a sin, in the sense in which we consider sin. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 114-115)

Sterling W. Sill, who is an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, made these statements:

Some time ago I heard a radio speaker discussing the fall of Adam. He seemed to think that Adam should be held responsible for most of the troubles that are presently plaguing our world . . .

This old sectarian doctrine, built around the idea of man's natural depravity and weakness inherited from Adam, is at the root of innumerable problems among us. Adam was one of the greatest men who has ever lived upon the earth. . . .

Under Christ Adam yet stands at our head . . . Adam fell, but he fell in the right direction. He fell toward the goal . . .

Adam fell, but **he fell upward**. Jesus says to us, "Come up higher." Our greatest need is to raise our standards, the standards of our thinking, and the standards of our living. (*Desert News*, Church Section, July 31, 1965, p. 7)

In his thesis, "The Social Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy," Owen Kendall White, Jr., makes these interesting observations:

Mormonism rejects the notion that man's condition is best described by "depravity." Nowhere within Mormon theology is its optimism concerning man's natural condition more clearly apparent than in this denial of the Christian doctrine of original sin. . . . In contrast with the orthodox Christian notion that the fall resulted in a condition of human depravity, the Mormon view asserts that the fall was a necessary condition for man to realize his ultimate potential. . . . Mormons generally avoid using "sin" to describe Adam's disobedience to God since it seems too extreme for them. . . . to the Mormon the fall is a fall upward rather than downward. It is an important step in the eternal quest of man. In a recent article, Sterling Sill, a contemporary Mormon ecclesiastical official, wrote: "Adam fell, but he fell in the right direction." . . .

A second though perhaps not as important evidence of the Mormon rejection of original sin is found in the status accorded Adam within Mormon angelology. Rather than the view of literalistic Christian orthodoxy where Adam is conceived as the cause of human suffering, the scoundrel who got mankind into this mess, Mormonism holds Adam in very high esteem indeed. . . .

Within Mormon angelology Adam is Michael the Archangel, the Ancient of Days. He assisted in the creation process and will assist in the resurrecting of the dead. He holds positions of importance next to the members of the Godhead. Indeed, Adam was so highly regarded within early Mormonism that Brigham Young elevated him to the status of God. ("The Social Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy," Master's thesis, by Owen Kendall White, Jr., University of Utah, June 1967, pp. 101-104)

### "Our Father and Our God"

On April 9, 1852, Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, publicly preached the Adam-God doctrine. In this sermon he stated:

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, the Arch-angel, the Ancient of Days! about whom holy men have written and spoken—**He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do**. Every man upon the earth, professing Christian or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later. . . . the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum, as in all heavenly bodies, and in organizing element, perfectly represented in the Deity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pp. 50-51)

The fact that the Mormon people understood Brigham Young to mean just what he said concerning Adam being God is verified by articles that appeared in the church's publication, *Millennial Star*. On December 10, 1853, an article entitled, "**Adam, the Father and God of the Human Family**" appeared in the *Millennial Star*.

In this article the following statements are found:

The above sentiment appeared in *Star* No. 48, a little to the surprise of some of its readers: and while the sentiment may have appeared **blasphemous to the ignorant**; it has no doubt given rise to some serious reflections with the more candid and comprehensive mind . . . **Adam is really God! And why not?** (*Millennial Star*, vol. 15, p. 801)

On page 825 of the same volume the following appeared:

It has been said that **Adam is God and Father of the human family**, and persons are perhaps in fear and great trouble of mind, lest they have to acknowledge him **as such** in some future day. **For our part we would much rather acknowledge Adam to be our Father, than hunt for another, and take up with the devil.**

In vol. 17, page 195, of the *Millennial Star* this statement was made:

. . . every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is the God of the whole earth. Then will the words of the Prophet Brigham, **when speaking of Adam**, be fully realized—**“He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do.”**

Elder James A. Little made the following statement: “I believe in the principle of obedience; and if I am told that **Adam is our Father and our God, I just believe it**” (*Millennial Star*, vol. 16, p. 530).

Under the date of June 8, 1868, the following is recorded in the “Minutes of the School of the Prophets,” held in Provo, Utah:

A. F. Mac[Donald] I thought I would speak briefly in relation to Adam being our God—since the year 1853 when the Prest first spoke on this subject. I have frequently endeavored to reconcile what I have read with regard to this matter. I believe what the Pres. says on the subject although it comes in contact with all our tradition—I have not any doubt in my mind but that Adam is our God. . . .

Geo. G. Bywater rose and spoke . . . when I first heard the doctrine of Adam being our Father and God, I was favorably impressed—enjoyed, and hailed it as a new Revelation—it appeared reasonable to me as the father of our spirits, that he should introduce us here . . . (“Minutes of the School of the Prophets,” Provo, Utah, 1868-1871, pp. 38-39 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society)

Brigham Young’s Adam-God doctrine met with opposition both within and without the church. In October 1857 he stated:

Some have grumbled because I believe **our God to be so near to us as Father Adam**. There are many who know **that doctrine to be true**. . . . Just wait till you pass Joseph Smith; . . . and after you pass the Apostles . . . and after a while you come to Jesus; and when you at length meet **Father Adam**, how strange it will appear to your present notions. . . . we shall be very glad to see the white locks of **Father Adam**. But those are ideas which do not concern us at present, although it is written in the Bible—“This is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, pp. 331-332)

That the Adam-God doctrine was causing dissension in the Mormon Church is evident from the articles that appeared in the *Millennial Star*. One article said that some of the officers had not met in council for three years because of the Adam-God doctrine:

. . . some of the officers **have not met in council for three years**. They are lacking faith on **one principle**—the last “cat that was let out of the bag.” Polygamy has been got over pretty well, that cloud has vanished away, but **they are troubled about Adam being our Father and God**. There is a very intelligent person investigating our principles, and who has been a great help to the Saints; he has all the works, and can get along very well with everything else but the last “cat,” and as soon as he can see that clearly, he will become a “Mormon.” I instructed him to write to Liverpool upon it. (*Millennial Star*, vol. 16, p. 482)

An answer to this problem appeared on page 534 of the same volume:

Concerning the item of **doctrine** alluded to by Elder Caffall and others, viz., **that Adam is our Father and God**, I have to say do not trouble yourselves, neither let the Saints be troubled about this matter . . . If, as Elder Caffall remarked, there are those who are waiting at the door of the Church for this **objection** to be removed, tell such, the **Prophet and Apostle Brigham Young has declared it, and that is the word of the Lord**. (*Millennial Star*, vol. 16, p. 534)

In his Master’s thesis, Rodney Turner made these statements: “. . . it is apparent that the doctrine was upsetting the theological equilibrium of some of the membership in England; that it was having a similar effect in America is also true” (“The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology,” M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, August 1953, p. 12).

On page 37 of the same thesis Rodney Turner states:

The members were puzzled, even alarmed by this shocking new concept. It was contrary to much that they had accepted as truth all their lives. And it was for that very reason that F. D. Richards had counseled the missionaries to help the membership “roll it aside” until it could be incorporated into their faith “without the sound of hammer of [or?] chisel.”

Joseph Lee Robinson, in his journal and autobiography (the journal the Apostle Richards tried to prevent us from seeing), stated that he feared that the Apostle Orson Pratt would apostatize because of his opposition to the Adam-God doctrine:

Oct. 6th attend Conference, a very interesting Conference, for at this meeting President Brigham Young said thus, that Adam and Eve, were the names of the first man and woman, of every Earth that was ever organized, and that **Adam and Eve were the natural father and mother of every spirit that comes to this planet, or that receives tabernacles on this planet**, consequently **we are brothers and sisters, and that Adam was, God our Eternal Father**, this as Brother Heber remarked was letting the cat out of the Bag, and it came to pass, I believed every word . . . our Beloved Brother **Orson Prat[t]** told me **he did not believe it He said he would prove by the scripture it was not correct**. I felt very sorry to hear professor, Orson Prat[t] say that, **I feared lest he should apostetize**, . . .

In his thesis, Rodney Turner gives some very interesting information concerning Orson Pratt’s disagreement with Brigham Young:

. . . according to T.B.H. Stenhouse...there was one man who did publicly oppose Brigham Young in his views. That man was Orson Pratt . . . of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Of him Stenhouse writes: “The mass of the Mormon people do not believe in the Adam-deity, but of them all, one only, Orson Pratt, has dared to make public protest against that doctrine.” (“The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology,” p. 38)

Stenhouse claimed that Pratt found himself in serious trouble with Brigham Young over this matter, and tells of a meeting held in “Brigham’s little office.” While Rodney Turner tends to view Stenhouse’s story with suspicion, he admits that Brigham Young and Orson Pratt may have disagreed over the Adam-God doctrine:

The Stenhouse reference to an interview between Orson Pratt and Brigham Young in the latter’s “little office” is apparently based on fact. According to S. W. Richards, . . . such a meeting did take place on at least one occasion. However, the Richard’s statement gives the year as 1856, and not 1863 as Stenhouse indicates. Possibly more than one such meeting took place; in which event there is no real conflict between the two accounts. In the diary of Samuel Whitney Richards we read:

Tues. March 11, 1856

Evening with the Regency in the Upper Room of the President’s Office, . . . A very serious conversation took place between Prest. B. Young and Orson upon doctrine. O. P. was directly opposed to the Prest views and very freely expressed his entire disbelief in

them after being told by the President that things were so and so in the name of the Lord. He was firm in the Position that the Prest's word in the name of the Lord, was not the word of the Lord to him. The Prest did not believe that Orson would ever be Adam, to learn by experience the facts discussed, but every other person in the room would if they lived faithful. . . .

The context of the above entry gives us good reason to believe that doctrine in some way concerning Adam was the cause of the disagreement between President Young and Orson Pratt. The president's remark that he did not believe "that Orson would ever be Adam," obviously "an Adam," would indicate this. ("The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology," pp. 40-41)

According to the "Minutes of the School of the Prophets," held in Provo, Utah, the Apostle Lyman as well as Orson Pratt opposed Brigham Young's Adam-God doctrine. Under the date of June 8, 1868, we read:

The doctrine preached by Prest Young for a few years back wherein he says that **Adam is our God—the God we worship**—that most of the people believe this . . . Amasa Lyman stumbled on this he did **not** believe it—he did not believe in the atonement of Jesus—Orson Pratt has also told the Prest that he does **not** believe it—this is not the way to act—we should not suffer ourselves to entertain one doubt—we are not accountable on points of Doctrine if the President makes a statement it is not our prerogative to dispute it. ("Minutes of the School of the Prophets," Provo, Utah, 1868–1871, p. 38 of typed copy at the Utah State Historical Society)

In spite of the opposition, Brigham Young continued to teach the Adam-God doctrine. In 1873, just a few years before his death, Brigham Young declared:

How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and **which God revealed to me**—namely that **Adam is our Father and God** . . . Our Father Adam helped to make this earth, it was created expressly for him . . . He brought one of his wives with him. . . . We say that Father Adam came here and helped to make the earth. Who is he? He is Michael, . . . He was the first man on the earth, and its framer and maker. He with the help of his brethren brought it into existence. Then he said, "I want **my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here**. I once dwelt upon an earth something like this, **in a mortal state**. I was faithful, I received my crown and exaltation. I have the privilege of extending my work, and to its increase there will be no end. **I want my children that were born to me in the spirit world to come here and take tabernacles of flesh that their spirits may have a house**, a tabernacle, or a dwelling place as mine has," and where is the mystery? (Sermon by Brigham Young, printed in the *Deseret News*, June 14, 1873)

There are four important points that should be noted concerning the Adam-God doctrine. They are as follows:

**1. Adam not created of the dust of this earth.** In a sermon delivered in 1852, Brigham Young stated:

When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a **celestial body** . . . He helped to make and organize this world. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 50)

Brigham Young also stated:

You believe Adam was made of the dust of this earth. **This I do not believe**, though it is supposed that it is so written in the Bible; but it is not to my understanding. You can write that information to the States, if you please—that I have publicly declared that I do **not** believe that portion of the Bible as the Christian world do. I never did, and I never want to. What is the reason I do not? Because I have come to understanding, and banished from my mind all the baby stories my mother taught me when I was a child. (*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 6)

Though we have it in history that our father Adam was made of the dust of this earth, and that he knew nothing about God previous

to being made here, yet it is not so; and when we learn the truth we shall see and understand that he helped to make this world, and was the chief manager in that operation.

He was the person who brought the animals and the seeds from other planets to this world, and brought a wife with him and stayed here. You may read and believe what you please as to what is found written in the Bible. Adam was made from the dust of **an** earth, but not from the dust of **this** earth. He was made as you and I are made, and no person was ever made upon any other principle. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, p. 319)

Rodney Turner makes this comment concerning this matter:

Apparently President Young means that Adam was provided with a physical body through the normal pattern of conception, embryonic development, and birth, since that is [the] method by which "you and I are made." ("The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology," p. 20)

**2. Adam is the only God with whom we have to do.** Brigham Young stated: "He is our Father and **our God**, and the **only God** with whom we have to do" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 50).

On February 3, 1861, John D. Lee recorded the following in his journal: "Eving I attend Prayer meeting & instruct the Saints on the points of Doctrine refered to by the true *Latterday Saints Herald* & their Bombarding Pres. B. Young for Saying that Adam is **all the God** that we have to do with & to those that know no better, it is quite a stumbling Block . . ." (*A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee*, vol. 1, p. 293). In the book, *Women of Mormondom*, p. 196, we read: "When Brigham Young proclaimed to the nations that **Adam is our Father and God**, and Eve, his partner, the Mother of a world—**both in a mortal and celestial sense—he made the most important revelation ever oracled to the race since the days of Adam himself**." The reader will also remember that we quoted this statement from the "Minutes of the School of the Prophets": ". . . Prest Young . . . says that **Adam is our God—the God we worship**—that most of the people believe this . . ."

**3. Adam is the Father of our Spirits.** Brigham Young also taught that Adam was the Father of our spirits. In 1873 he stated:

. . . Father Adam came here and helped to make the earth. . . . Then he said, "I want **my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here**. . . . I want My children that were **born to me in the spirit world** to come here and take tabernacles of flesh . . ." (*Deseret News*, June 14, 1873)

Joseph Lee Robinson stated that Brigham Young taught that Adam was the father of our spirits. The following appears in his journal and autobiography: "Brigham Young said . . . that **Adam and Eve were the natural father and mother of every spirit that comes to this planet, or that received, tabernacles on this planet, . . . and that Adam was God, our Eternal Father**, . . . On page 180 of *Women of Mormondom* we read the following: "**Adam and Eve are the names of the fathers and mothers of worlds . . . These were father and mother of a world of spirits who had been born to them in heaven**."

**4. Adam, the Father of Jesus Christ.** Since Brigham Young was teaching that Adam was the father of our spirits, it was very easy to teach that Adam was also the father of Jesus. In a discourse delivered April 9, 1852, Brigham Young declared:

When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? **He is the first of the human family**; . . . I could tell you much more about this; but were I to tell you the

DISCOURSE

By PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG, delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, June 8th, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I WILL read the text that my brother Joseph has been talking about—"If the foundation be destroyed what can the righteous do? For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privately shoot at the upright in heart." I shall make a few remarks to the Latter-day Saints and make the application of this scripture as liberal as I feel to. First, I will inquire of my brethren and sisters how far they would like to be righteous and upright in heart,—how far they would like to be Saints. I frequently see the application of our motto here and there, "We are the Saints." You ask the native if he is a captain, he will sometimes say, "Yes, a little."

"How much?" "I am a captain, so much?" another one says, "I am a captain so much while another one is all captain, or 'Paw' he is the chief. Well, how much do we want to be Saints? A little, but not much, it would interfere upon our speculations, our enviousness, our prepossessed notions, upon our daily labor, and, the fact is, we want to be enough Saints to escape the punishment that will come upon the ungodly, and to get into the kingdom of heaven by squeezing in at the door. I am now going to ask a question of both Saint and sinner. I think I might venture to make the question a national one. Is it good for man to use ardent spirits? In my remarks I shall confine myself, for awhile at least, to this subject, without referring to other traits in the character of the children of men. Is it good for the people in the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, or we will say in all the eastern States—the old bay States, away down in Yankee land—to drink and be drunken? I say it is good for us Yankees to drink and be drunken? We have said not, and the time has been, and I do not know but that it continues to this day, when parties carried in their pockets little tin canteens made for us Yankees to drink from. The Pilgrims' Progress, or a small Bible, and those who had them were thought to be preachers. But when they got into a suitable place up went the cup and down went the whisky.

Now is this good? I ask this question of the people of the eastern States, and then come to the middle States, to the western States, to the Southern States, and finally, the whole United States, is it good for men to drink and be drunken? Is it good to use liquor? Is it a benefit to the people? Saints, what say you? Shall I answer the question for you? If I do, I shall say that it is better to let ardent spirits entirely alone than to use them, and that people are better off without liquor than with it.

Now I will refer to the customs which prevailed in this city when it was inhabited by Latter-day Saints only. Pass through the streets here then, and would you see a man intoxicated from day to day, week to week, month to month, or from one year's end to another? No, I do not suppose a drunken man was ever seen in the streets of this city until strangers came along and demanded, through necessity they said, that liquor be sold, that a house be kept where they could obtain that which they were in the habit of using. I might carry this a little further and touch upon our moral status in other ways. I fear after a year or so away—perhaps twelve or fifteen years—after we came here, and if any families were sick they could send a child, any time in the night, two, three, four or half a dozen blocks, to Mr. Jones and Mr. Jones could go to the house of the patient, and cross and re-cross, and go over the city night if necessary, or disturbed or dis-question asked. Sister Jones was across a ditch for a man was got from the canyon returning home any three better in the morning or child want

was a hand ready, and the word was—"Yes, I will help you across this high place, get into my wagon and ride across this rough, the streets are not worked, the road is wet and it is bad passing, I will take you where you want to go. Where are you going?" To Sister Smith's, she is sick and wants assistance, and they would pass along. Was there a grog-shop in this city then? Not one. Was there a place where liquor was sold? Not one, unless it was where it was necessary to make up a little medicine. Compare that with the present status of this city. Is it dangerous now for a woman to pass around this temple block after dark? Yes, she may expect to be grabbed by some ruffian and treated like a brute. Is it dangerous for a man to pass around the city at night? Yes, he may expect somebody or other to put his arm around his neck and stop his breath until another one can rob him.

Here I wish to make the application—Is it beautiful, is it lovely to behold here in the city, the luxury of this civilization? What do you say? "Oh, how I do love Babylon," says one, "How I do love this fashionable coat, this beautiful hat, this pretty frock, that lovely ribbon?" "Oh, see the hat on that lady," and she sees the five bushel basket sticking out behind. How beautiful it is! And she on stills, spoiling the spine of her back. How beautiful! It is lovely in the extreme, it is right from Babylon. What do you say, Saints? must say that when I talk about these things I am like the young man who lost his apples. He was in the habit of swearing a good deal, and one day while driving a load of apples up hill the hind wheel of his wagon came out, and before he noticed it he had lost his apples. When he saw the situation said he, "I will not say a word, any swearing that I can do will fall to do justice to the occasion." So with me—any language that I know anything about would utterly fail in conveying a correct idea of the ridiculous nature of the conduct of many who profess to be Latter-day Saints.

I will now read this text again—"For lo, the wicked bend their bow"—do you know anybody who does this? Do you, Latter-day Saints, know of any such persons in this city? "For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privately shoot at the upright in heart." Take the people of this city as they were and take them as they are, and make the application for yourselves. The next verse says—"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" I shall apply this in my own way. If I can not suit myself thoroughly I will suit myself as well as I can; if I can not suit you, you must try and suit yourself. I ask all the Latter-day Saints, do you like the condition here at the present time? Do you like to walk here in the evening or in the day time, and see and hear what you are forced to see and hear? Do you like to pass through these grog-shops, or to enter the gambling halls and other mischievous places and see what their inmates are doing? I am going to make my wishes known to you without regard to the feelings of any who may blame me for making these remarks, and I would that I had all the Latter-day Saints who live in this city before me this afternoon. But as they are not here I shall probably ask the bishops and teachers to learn what I want to find out. My brother has been speaking of law. You know that civilized nations are governed by law. There are just as good and wholesome laws in this city, Territory and Government as can be found anywhere. We have just as good laws in these United States and in the different States as can be found, probably, in any country on the face of the whole earth. In carrying out these laws it is our privilege, to magnify ourselves as individual citizens, as a community, men and women dwelling together in a town or city, to sign a petition to

hard to take their measurement as Saints. I carry in my pocket a rule on which the inches are divided into a hundred parts. Such a rule would be necessary, in my opinion, to measure the standing of those professing to be Saints who would refuse to sign a petition to stop drunkenness. You may differ from me in your opinion, and you have a perfect right to; but I have the same right to differ from you; but it is my opinion that the man or woman whose name is upon our records as a Latter-day Saint, who would fellowship what we see and have to endure here all the time, is a very poor Saint. I have some notion to ask you whether you like these things, and who among you will sign a petition to the City Council to stop them. I must explain here that the evils we see in our city, Territory, ride over and trample upon them under your feet, and break whatever law the City Council may enact. This is what our administrators of the law say, and to this cause only can be attributed whatever of crime and violence of law we see manifested here.

It has been said that Brother Brigham has proffered his services to help stop the liquor traffic in this city. I will say, that is true, and I do it upon the principle of justice, truth, and with the bounds of our local laws, and in no other way; and if the inhabitants of this city are disposed to raise their voices and influence against the conduct we see here, and the City Council passes a law to stop the drunkenness and gambling, they will find us the citizens—ready to sustain them by our faith and works. "For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privately shoot at the upright in heart."

I love it, the people of the United States, to all good citizens from the Atlantic to the Pacific, if it is not better to live without gambling and drunkenness than to have them in our midst? What would they say if they were to express an opinion on the subject? The leading portion of them would say, "Let us have sober, civil communities," and they would rejoice to see the time when our Presidents, law-makers, and executives of the law would live continually with a sober, steady brain, able to judge between right and wrong, and with willing hearts and steady hands administer the laws to this great nation in righteousness. Will we Latter-day Saints sign a petition to the Mayor and City Council to stop these evils entirely? (Congregation said, "Yes"). I will invite all, whether citizens or strangers, who are in favor of a people living a sober, steady life, to vote on this question, if they desire to do so. (The congregation voted unanimously in favor, by showing their right hands.) Does anybody want to vote against it? Is there a man who wants to lift his hand against seeing a sober, civil, industrious community, a community that will work for what they need, instead of gambling, robbing and plundering for it? If there is a man, either in the church or out, present this afternoon, he is at liberty to make it manifest by the same sign. (No dissenters). No, we Latter-day Saints go together, and one fault found with us is that we will hang together. I recollect, not over a hundred years ago, there was a certain man in Philadelphia who said—"We are accused of hanging together; we might just as well hang together as hang separate, and if we do not hang together, we shall certainly hang separate." He was a rebel and traitor, so said the English government, and he was talking to his companions, and they had to hang, but by hanging together they saved their necks and gained the freedom of their country. That is the way with the Latter-day Saints, they hang together just enough to save themselves.

Now that I have your minds

ing honestly. I want the bishops to go to and find out how many in their wards will sign a paper to the City Council, asking its members to pass a law for the suppression of liquor selling and enforce the present law against gambling. I am thankful that I have the privilege and am willing to put my name at the head of such a paper, for I am opposed to these things. At the present time it seems to be impossible for the City Council to license people to keep bars for the accommodation of strangers. They would be glad to do so, and would be reasonable with those who wanted them, but owing to circumstances it does seem that our citizens will be bound to stop the whole of it, or else let a few ride over every law enacted for the preservation of the peace and good order of the city. I want to make a few remarks upon the subject touched upon by my brother, but I shall not have the time. I frequently think, in my meditations, how glad we should be to instruct the world with regard to the things of God, if they would hear, and receive our teachings in good and honest hearts and profit by them. I have been found fault with a great many times for casting reflections upon men of science, and especially upon theologians, because of the little knowledge they possess about man being on the earth, about the earth itself, about our Father in heaven, his Son Jesus Christ, the order of heavenly things, the laws by which angels exist, by which the worlds were created and are held in existence, &c. How pleased we would be to place these things before the people, if they would receive them! How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed to me—name, that Adam is our father and God—I do not know, I do not inquire, I care not thing about it. Our Father Adam helped to make this earth, it was created expressly for him, and after it was made he and his companions came here. He brought one of his wives with him, and she was called Eve, because she was the first woman upon the earth. Our Father Adam appeared to him, and held the keys of everlasting life and salvation to all his children who have or who ever will come upon the earth. I have been found fault with by the ministers of religion because I have said that they were ignorant. But I could not find any man on the earth who could tell me this, although it is one of the simplest things in the world, until I met and talked with Joseph Smith. Is it a great mystery that the earth exists? Is it a great mystery, that the world can not solve, that man is in the earth? Yes, it is; but to whom? To the ignorant—those who know nothing about it. It is no mystery to those who understand. Is it a mystery to the Christian world that Jesus is the Son of God, and still the son of man? Yes it is, it is hidden from them, and this fulfills the Scripture—"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, who have no faith, and who pay no attention to the Spirit of God. These things are called mysteries by the people because they know nothing about them, just like laying hands on the sick. Is it a mystery that fever should be rebuked and the sick healed by the laying on of the hands of a man who is endowed with authority from God and has been ordained to that gift? "Oh yes," say the ignorant, "we know nothing about it." That is true, but where is the mystery? Will the ignorant receive the truth when they hear it? No, they will not, and this is their condemnation, that light has come into the world, and they choose darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. That is the fact in the case. What is the mystery about it? They do not understand invisible things. Ask the wicked, "Do you know anything about the laying on of hands?" "Oh yes, such a man"—a man who is wicked in his whole life—"has the art of laying on of hands for curing the tooth-ache, fevers, wounds," &c.; and now, in ful-

priets and people—would follow after. Where did I declare this? In the cities of New York, Albany, Boston, throughout the United States and in England. Have I seen this fulfilled? I have. I told the people that as true as God lived, if they would not have truth they would have error sent unto them, and they would believe it. What is the mystery of it?

The Christian world read, and think much about, St. Paul, and St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles. These men were faithful to and magnified the priesthood while on the earth. Now, where will be the mystery, after they have passed through all the ordeals, and have been crowned and exalted, and received their inheritances in the eternal worlds of glory, for them to be sent forth, as the Gods have been for ever and ever, with the command—"Make yourselves a people, and people it with your own children?" Do you think the starry heavens are going to fall? Do the Christian world or the heathen world think that all things are going to be wrapped up, compressed, and annihilated in eternal flames? Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe the great things that God has purposed in his own mind!

My brother said that God is as we are. He did not use these words to be literally understood. He meant simply, that in our organization we have all the properties in embryo in our bodies that our Father has in his, and we are to be, socially, by the spirit and by the flesh we are his children. Do you think that God, who holds the eternities in his hands and can do all things at pleasure, is not capable of sending forth his own offspring, and forming this flesh for his own offspring? Where is the mystery in this? We say that Father Adam came here and helped to make the earth. Who is he? He is Michael, a great prince, and it was said to him by Elohim, "Go ye and make an earth." What is the great mystery about it? He came and formed the earth. Geologists tell us that it was here millions of years ago. How do they know? They know nothing about it. But suppose it was here, what of it? Adam found it in a state of chaos, unorganized and incomplete. Philosophers have theorized upon the development of the products of the earth, for instance, in the vegetable kingdom, say the little first green first, then the larger vegetation. The first stage was completed then came the various orders of the animal creation; and finally man appeared. Philosophers have theorized upon whether these notions are true or not, they are more or less speculative. Adam came here and got it up in a shape that would suit him to commence building up a great mystery about it? None, that I know of. The mystery in this, as with minerals, or anything else, is only to understand the light from darkness. Adam came here, and then they brought his wife. "Well," says one, "Why was Adam called Adam?" He was the first man on the earth, and his frame was made. He with the help of his brethren, brought it into existence. Then he said, "I want my children who are in the spirit world to come and dwell with me, and to be upon an earth something like this, in a mortal state, I was faithful, I received my crown and exaltation. I have the privilege of extending my work, and to increase there will be no end. I want my children that were born to me in the spirit world to understand the light from darkness, and that their spirits may have a house, a tabernacle or a dwelling place as mine has, and where is the mystery?"

Now for Mother Eve. The evil principle always has and always will exist. Well, a certain character came along, and said to Mother Eve, "The Lord has told you that you must not do so and so, and so, and you shall surely die. But I tell you that if you do not do this you will never know good from evil, you will never be redeemed, and you may live on the earth forever and ever, and you will never know what the Gods know." The devil told the truth, what is the mystery about it? He is doing it to-day. He is telling one or two truths and mixing them with a thousand errors to get the people to swallow them. I do not blame Mother Eve, I would not have had her miss eating the forbidden fruit for anything in the world. I would not give a groat if I could not understand the light from darkness, I can understand the bitter from the sweet, so can you. Here is intelligence, come here and take a mouthful of it, but bind it up and make it glory or exaltation? There is none. They must pass through the same ordeals as the Gods that they may know good from evil, how to succor the tempted, tried and weak, and how to overcome the tempter, and to be free from the falling sinper. The Lord has revealed his gospel and instituted in ordinances that the inhabitants of the earth may be put in possession of eternal life. But few of them, however, will accept it. I have seen many thousands of men who are naturally just as honest as I am, but through traditions there has been which delaters them of their minds which delaters them of their liberty I have in my heart. They

A photograph of the *Deseret Weekly News*, June 18, 1873. Brigham Young defends his Adam-God doctrine. He states that God revealed the doctrine to him. He also claimed that Adam is the father of the spirits that come to this earth to take mortal bodies. This sermon was also printed in the *Deseret Evening News*, June 14, 1873.

whole truth, **blasphemy** would be nothing to it, in the estimation of the superstitious and over righteous of mankind. However, **I have told you that truth as far as I have gone.** . . . 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. Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, for **they will prove their salvation or damnation.** (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, pp. 50-51)

John A. Widtsoe, who was a recent Apostle in the Mormon Church, denied that Brigham Young taught that Adam was the Father of Christ:

Brigham Young's much-discussed sermon says that "Jesus was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in heaven." Enemies of the Church, or **stupid people**, reading also that Adam is "our father and our God," have heralded far and wide that the Mormons believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of Adam. (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3 vols. in 1, p. 56)

It is easy to show that Apostle Widtsoe's statement is false for many good Mormons in Utah held to this view. For instance, Hosea Stout, who was a prominent Mormon, recorded the following in his diary under the date of April 9, 1852:

Another meeting this evening. President B. Young taught that **Adam was the father of Jesus and the only God to us.** That he came to this world in a resurrected [sic] body & c more hereafter. (*On the Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, University of Utah Press, 1964, vol. 2, p. 435)

In the *Women of Mormondom* we read:

**Adam is our father and God.** He is the God of the earth. So says **Brigham Young** . . . He is **the father of our elder brother, Jesus Christ**—the father of him who shall also come as Messiah to reign. He is the father of the **spirits** as well as the tabernacles of the sons and daughters of man. Adam! (*Women of Mormondom*, p. 179)

Heber C. Kimball, the first councilor to Brigham Young, stated:

I have learned by experience that there is but one God that pertains to this people, and he is the God that pertains to this earth—the **first man. That first man sent his own son to redeem the world,** . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, p. 1)

In 1856 the Mormons published a hymnal which contained a hymn entitled, "We Believe In Our God." This hymn plainly taught that Adam was the father of Christ:

We believe in our God the great Prince of His race, The Archangel Michael, the Ancient of Days, Our own Father **Adam**, earth's Lord, as is plain, Who'll counsel and fight for his children again.

We believe in **His Son**, Jesus Christ, who, in love To his brethren and sisters, came down from above To die to redeem them from death, and to teach To mortals and spirits the Gospel we preach. (*Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Liverpool, 1856, p. 375, as quoted in "The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology," p. 16)

Rodney Turner states that this hymn "was not included in later editions of the hymnal in England. Nor was the writer able to find it in any hymnal published by the Church in America. Franklin D. Richards must have approved it for publication, since he edited the particular edition in which it is found" (*Ibid.*, p. 16).

George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, seemed to believe that Adam was the father of Christ. His son recorded the following in his journal:

. . . Father [George Q. Cannon] . . . asked me what I understood concerning Mary conceiving the Savior; and as I found no answer, he asked what was to prevent Father Adam from visiting and overshadowing the mother of Jesus. "Then," said I, "He must have

been a resurrected Being." "Yes," said he, "and though Christ is said to have been the first fruits of them that slept, yet the Savior said he did nothing but what He had seen His Father do, for He had power to lay down His life and take it up again. Adam, though made of dust, was made, as Pres. Young said, of the dust of another planet than this." I was very much instructed by the conversation and this day's services. ("Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon," March 10, 1888, vol. 10, pp. 178-179; original at Brigham Young University)

Under the date of June 23, 1889, Abraham Cannon recorded that George Q. Cannon taught that "Jesus Christ is Jehovah" and that "Adam is His Father and our God" ("Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon," vol. 11, p. 39).

Below is a photograph from Abraham H. Cannon's journal:

*Sunday, June 23d, 1889;— Very hot day. — I spent the forenoon in conversing on the Gospel principles and reading. Father proved to my entire satisfaction this morning by passage from the Book of Mormon "nd Doctrine "nd Covenants that all men, even the sons of perdition, will be resurrected and stand before God to be judged: He believes that Jesus Christ is Jehovah, and that Adam is His Father and our God; that under certain unknown conditions the benefits of the Savior's atonement extend to our entire solar system. Jesus, in speaking of Him*

The information given above certainly shows that Brigham Young did teach that Jesus was the son of Adam, and that it was not just "Enemies of the Church, or stupid people" who felt that he taught this doctrine. The most devastating evidence, however, comes from the "Journal of L. John Nuttall." On Wednesday, February 7, 1877, L. John Nuttall recorded in his journal that Brigham Young taught that Jesus was the son of Adam:

Wed 7 . . . **Prest Young** was filled with the spirit of God & revelation & said, when we got our washings and anointings under the hands of the Prophet Joseph at Nauvoo we had only one room to work in . . . he gave the Key words, tokens (sic) and penalties . . . these things of which I have been speaking are what are termed the mysteries of godliness but they enable you to understand the expression of Jesus made while in Jerusalem. This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent . . . **Adam** was an immortal being when he came on this earth . . . and had begotten **all the spirit** that was to come to this earth and Eve our common Mother who is the mother of all living bore those spirits in the celestial world . . .

Father **Adam's oldest son (Jesus the Savior)** who is the heir of the family is **Father Adams first begotten in the spirit World, who according to the flesh is the only begotten** as it is written. (In his divinity he having gone back into the spirit world, and come in **the spirit to Mary and she conceived** . . .) (*Journal of L. John Nuttall*, vol. 1, pp. 18-21, taken from a typed copy at the Brigham Young University)

The Mormon writer Rodney Turner seems to be willing to concede that the Nuttall journal probably contains a reliable account of Brigham Young's comments:

There is no legit[i]mate reason to question the general accuracy of this account of Brigham Young's remarks as it appears in the Nuttall journal. . . . He acted as private secretary to President John Taylor (1879-1887) and President Wilford Woodruff (1887-1892). . . . He occasionally acted as a clerk in the general conferences of the Church; and in taking of formal notes was considered "extremely reliable." In fact, he was acting as a special secretary to President Young at the time the journal entry in question was made. . . .

There is one thought expressed in the Nuttall journal

which merits analysis. It is the explanation of how Adam, who in a state of morality had many direct offspring, could still be the Father of Christ, who is spoken of as the “Only Begotten” Son of God. Brigham Young implies that Christ is the “only begotten” of Adam “in his divinity.” In other words, when Adam begat physical offspring, he did so in a fallen state of mortality which precluded the transfer of “divinity” or immortality to that offspring. But in the case of the Savior, such a transfer of divinity could take place because Adam and Eve, without actually suffering a physical death, had “returned to the spirit world from whence they came” and reassumed their former glory and divinity. Thus, Adam, having regained his divinity and immortality, could, in begetting Christ, declare him to be the “Only Begotten Son” . . . (“The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology,” M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, August 1953, pp. 33-35)

When the Mormon Church was accused of teaching that “Adam is God . . . and that Jesus is his son,” the Mormon historian B. H. Roberts replied:

As a matter of fact, the “Mormon” Church does not teach that doctrine. A few men in the “Mormon” Church have held such views: and several of them **quite prominent in the councils of the church**, . . . **Brigham Young and others may have taught that doctrine**. . . (*Deseret News*, July 23, 1921)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth President of the Church, is not as willing to admit that “Brigham Young and others may have taught that doctrine.” In his book, *Doctrines of Salvation*, he makes this statement:

The statement by President Brigham Young that the Father is the first of the human family is easily explained. But the expression that he was the same character that was in the Garden of Eden has led to misunderstanding because of the implication which our enemies place upon it that it has reference to Adam. **Unfortunately President Brigham Young is not here to make his meaning in this regard perfectly clear.**” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 102)

### Confusion and Strife

Brigham Young’s Adam-God doctrine has brought much confusion into the Mormon Church. Wilford Woodruff, the fourth President of the Church, once stated:

Cease troubling yourselves about who God is; who Adam is, who Christ is, who Jehovah is. For heaven’s sake, let these things alone. . . God is God. Christ is Christ. The Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost. That should be enough for you and me to know. . . I say this because we are troubled every little while with inquiries from Elders anxious to know who God is, who Christ is, and **who Adam is. I say to the elders of Israel, stop this.** (*Millennial Star*, vol. 57, pp. 355-356)

In all fairness to the Mormon Church it should be stated that they no longer teach the Adam-God doctrine, even though some members of the church still believe it. Anyone who is caught teaching this doctrine is liable to be excommunicated. This, however, shows the inconsistency of the Mormon Church, for they say that Brigham Young was a prophet, and at the same time they will excommunicate a person for believing in his teachings.

Even before the turn of the century the Mormon leaders seemed to be ashamed of the Adam-God doctrine. On November 28, 1898, George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency, stated that Brigham Young had taught some things concerning Adam and Jesus, but they felt it was not “wise to advocate these matters”:

I was stopped yesterday afternoon by a young man, who wanted to know whether Adam was the Father of our Lord and Savior—whether he was the being we worshipped, etc. Now, we can get ourselves very easily puzzled, if we choose to do so, by speculating upon doctrines

and principles of this character. The Lord has said through His Prophet that there are two personages in the Godhead. That ought to be sufficient for us at the present time. . . . Concerning the doctrine in regard to **Adam and the Savior**, the Prophet Brigham Young taught some things concerning that; but the First Presidency and the twelve **do not think it wise to advocate these matters**. It is sufficient to know we have a Father—God the Eternal Father, who reveals Himself by His Holy Spirit unto those who seek Him; and that Jesus Christ is His Son, our Redeemer, the Savior of the world. (*Proceedings of the First Sunday School Convention of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Salt Lake City, 1899, as quoted in “The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scriptures and Theology,” pp. 69-70)

Even though the Mormon leaders were trying to put down Brigham Young’s Adam-God doctrine, many Mormons continued to believe it. Rodney Turner cites Charles W. Penrose, a member of the First Presidency, as making this statement in 1916: “There still remains, I can tell by the letters I have alluded to, an idea among some of the people that Adam was and is the Almighty and Eternal God” (“The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology,” p. 81). On the same page of his thesis, Rodney Turner cites Penrose as saying: “. . . the notion has taken hold of some of our brethren that Adam is the being that we should worship.”

In a letter, dated May 11, 1966, the Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards wrote: “Your third question: ‘Is the Adam God Doctrine, as taught in the *Journal of Discourses*, true?’ Answer: No.” In our *Case*, vol. 3, page 122, we show that some of the Mormon leaders now claim that Brigham Young was misquoted. This claim is completely untrue. Rodney Turner, who now teaches religion at the Brigham Young University, feels that it is impossible to maintain such a position:

Was Brigham Young Misquoted?

It is the writer’s opinion that the answer to this question is a categorical no. There is not the slightest evidence from Brigham Young, or any other source, that either his original remarks on April 9, 1852, or any of his subsequent statements were ever misquoted in the official publications of the Church. . . .

In the light of Brigham Young’s attitude toward the errors of others, and in view of the division created by his remarks concerning Adam, it would be stretching one’s credulity to the breaking point to believe that he would have remained silent had he been misquoted. To the contrary, we could expect him to be rather watchful of the manner in which his addresses were published in the official organs of the Church. . . . President Young did not hesitate to cite what he considered to be the false ideas of Orson Pratt by chapter and verse; had erroneous teachings concerning Adam been advanced due to the misquoting of his addresses, Brigham Young would surely have referred to those misquotations at sometime or other—he never did. . . . The complete absence of any real evidence to the contrary obliges the writer to conclude that Brigham Young has not been misquoted in the official publications of the Church. (“The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology,” M. A. thesis, Brigham Young University, August, 1953, pp. 45-47)

On page 58 of the same thesis, Rodney Turner states: “A careful, detached study of his available statements, as found in the official publications of the Church, will admit of no other conclusion than that the identification of Adam with God the Father by President Brigham Young is an irrefutable fact.”

We must agree with Rodney Turner; the evidence that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine is “irrefutable.”



## Apostle Petersen Fails to Show Brigham Young Misquoted

As we have shown in this chapter, after Brigham Young's death, his Adam-God doctrine fell into disrepute. In 1976 the Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen wrote a book in which he attacked this doctrine as unscriptural:

To say that Adam is God is, of course, opposed utterly and completely to the scriptures as well as to our Articles of Faith, . . . to say that we have nothing to do with "any God but Adam," . . . violates all the teachings of the gospel of Christ, who taught us to pray to the Father in the name of Christ, . . . (*Adam: Who Is He?* p. 14)

Apostle Petersen claimed that Brigham Young was misquoted on April 9, 1852, and brought forth some new information which he maintained would establish his case:

Elder Charles C. Rich, of the Council of the Twelve, was present on a day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported as saying Adam was Deity. In the copy of the *Journal of Discourses* that he had, Elder Rich referred to the misquotation as it appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, and in his own hand he wrote the following as the correct statement made by President Young: "Jesus our elder Brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character who talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Heavenly Father." (This signed statement is in the hands of the Church Historian.) . . .

On the face of it the mistake is obvious and was quickly noted by Elder Rich, who was present and heard the sermon. Hence the correction that he made. (*Adam: Who Is He?* pp. 16-17)

After *Adam: Who Is He?* appeared in print, Bob Witte marshaled evidence to show that Apostle Petersen was inaccurate in his statement about Apostle Rich correcting Brigham Young's statement (see the enlarged edition of *Where Does It Say That?*). Chris Vlachos later wrote an article which completely smashes Apostle Petersen's whole thesis:

What seems to be a good case made by Mr. Petersen crumbles, however upon cross-examination. C. C. Rich, who Petersen claims "was present and heard the sermon," was in reality not even in Salt Lake City on that day! Rich left San Bernardino, California, on March 24, 1852, for the Great Salt Lake. He did not reach his destination until April 21. Under this date, the LDS Journal History records:

April 21, 1852:

Elder Chas. C. Rich and thirteen others arrived today in G.S.L. from California.

In the May 1, 1852 issue of the Mormon *Deseret Weekly* the following announcement was made:

Elder C. C. Rich arrived on Wednesday, the 21 of April, in company with 13 others...direct from San Bernardino.

Hosea Stout, in his journal, also noted the event:

Wednesday 21st April 1852 . . . Gen. Rich and some 15 others arrived today from California by the South rout all well.

Furthermore, not only was C. C. Rich absent on the ninth, but the reference Petersen claims was written by C. C. Rich "in his own hand" was in reality written and signed by his son, Ben E. Rich, many years after the sermon was delivered!

Whether Mr. Petersen was deliberately seeking to suppress the facts or not, the truth is that there is no evidence whatsoever that Brigham Young was misquoted. As we shall see, Young came under much criticism from outside and from within the Mormon Church for teaching that Adam was God the Father. If he had merely been misquoted, Brigham simply could have corrected his hearers and

accusers. Instead, however, Young continued to affirm and preach this doctrine against all opposition. (*The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1979, pp. 99-100)

Although Apostle Petersen does not acknowledge making a mistake with regard to this important matter, he has made some very revealing changes in the 1979 printing of his book. He admits, in fact, that Charles Rich was not present and that the statement was in reality written by his son, Ben E. Rich:

Elder Charles C. Rich was not present on the day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported as saying Adam was our Father in heaven. (See *JD* 1:51.) The sermon was delivered April 9, 1852, and Elder Rich returned April 21. In a copy of the *Journal of Discourses* Elder Ben E. Rich, son of Elder Charles C. Rich, referred to the misquotation as it appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, and in his own hand corrected the statement to read as follows: "Jesus our Elder Brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character who talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in heaven." In this same statement Ben E. Rich wrote "As corrected above is what Prest. Young said, as testified to me by my father, C. C. Rich." (This signed statement is in the hands of the Church Historical Department.) . . .

On the face of it the mistake is obvious. We find in Genesis 2:15-16 and 3:8-9 that God walked and talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden. (*Adam: Who Is He?* 1979 printing, pp. 16-17)

The reader will notice that in the 1976 printing, Apostle Petersen asserted: "Elder Charles C. Rich, of the Council of the Twelve, was present on a day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported . . ." In the 1979 printing this was changed to read: "Elder Charles C. Rich was not present on the day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported . . ." The 1976 printing assured us that "Elder Rich referred to the misquotation as it appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, and in his own hand he wrote the following . . ." This was changed to read that "Elder Ben E. Rich, son of Elder Charles C. Rich, referred to the misquotation as it appears in the *Journal of Discourses*, and in his own hand corrected the statement . . ." Apostle Petersen originally stated: "On the face of it the mistake is obvious and was quickly noted by Elder Rich, who was present and heard the sermon. Hence the correction that he made." In the 1979 printing this was altered to read: "On the face of it the mistake is obvious. We find in Genesis 2:15-16 and 3:8-9 that God walked and talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden."

It is very difficult to understand how Apostle Petersen could make such a serious mistake. We wonder, too, why he continues to use this material when it is of no real value. Since Charles C. Rich was not present, and since his son, Ben E. Rich, who recorded the material, had not even been born at the time, we cannot see that it provides any substantial help to Apostle Petersen's thesis. The fact that he would even use such material shows that he is totally unprepared to deal with the issue of the Adam-God doctrine.

## More on Brigham Young's Fight Over the Adam-God Doctrine

Chris Vlachos has gleaned a great deal of new evidence from manuscript sources to prove that Brigham Young vigorously defended his Adam-God doctrine and that President Young and Apostle Pratt contended over this matter as indicated on page 174-75 of this book:

During a discourse given on Sunday night, February 19,

1854, Brigham Young again addressed the question of who begot Jesus Christ in the flesh. Speaking of Christ, he asked:

Who did beget him? His Father, and his father is our God, and the Father of our spirits, and he is the framer of the body, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who is he. He is Father Adam; Michael; the Ancient of day. . . .

While Brigham in his discourse of 1852 may have been unclear, in this 1854 address there is no question about his meaning. Here Brigham distinctly names Adam as God the Father. Wilford Woodruff, Mormon Apostle and later Church President, had no doubt about what Brigham meant. Referring to this discourse under the date of February 19, 1854, in his journal, Woodruff recorded:

He [Brigham Young] said that our God was Father Adam He was the Father of the Saviour Jesus Christ—Our God was no more or less than Adam, Michael the Arkangel.

It should be noted that Brigham identifies Adam as the “Father of our spirits.” . . . By referring to Adam as the Father of our spirits, Brigham was clearly identifying him as the being whom Mormons address as “Heavenly Father.” . . .

Though Richards and most of the other Church authorities accepted their prophet’s declaration as the word of God, there was one member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who openly opposed Brigham Young in his views. That man was Orson Pratt. Under the date of September 17, 1854, LDS Apostle Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal the details of a confrontation between Young and Pratt. . . . When Young declared some of Orson’s doctrines to be false, Pratt retaliated against the prophet by voicing his disbelief in the Adam-God doctrine:

Brother Pratt also thought that Adam was made of the dust of the Earth Could not believe that Adam was our God or the Father of Jesus Christ President Young said that He was that He came from another world . . . He told Brother Pratt to lay aside his Philosophical reasoning & get revelation from God to govern him & enlighten his mind more. . . .

This dispute between the Mormon Prophet and his Apostle continued for several years. Because of his disbelief in the Adam-God teaching and in other doctrines of Young, Pratt was for years upon the point of being severed from the Church. (*The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, vol. III, no. 2, 1979, pp. 101-104)

Gary James Bergera has prepared an excellent study of the conflict between Brigham Young and Orson Pratt (see *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1980, pp. 14–58). In this article Bergera has quoted a great deal of unpublished material from the LDS Church Archives. This material shows that the dissension between Young and Pratt lasted for years and became rather heated on some occasions. For instance, on January 27, 1860, Orson Pratt asserted:

. . . . When Joseph teaches any thing & Brigham seems to teach another contrary to Joseph . . . I believe them as Joseph has spoken them . . . I have spoken plainly I would rather not have spoken so plainly but I have no excuses to make President Young said I ought to make a confession But Orson Pratt is not a man to make a confession of what I do not believe. I am not going to crawl to Brigham and act the Hypocrite and confess what I do not Believe. I will be a free man President Young condemns my doctrines to be fals I do not believe them to be fals . . . I will not act the Hypocrite it may cost me my

fellowship But I will stick to it if I die tonight I would say O Lord God Almighty[y] I believe what I say. (“Minutes of a Meeting of the Presidency & Twelve Presidents of Seventies and Others assembled in President Youngs Council Room,” WWJ, 27 January 1860, as cited in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1980, p. 19)

In his reply to Pratt, Brigham Young countered: “‘You have been like a stubborn mule,’ . . . and have taken a fals position in order to accuse me . . . Orson Pratt puts down a lie to argue upon he has had fals ground all the time tonight . . .” (*Ibid.*)

On page 26 of the same article, Bergera cites an interesting exchange between Young and Pratt which is taken from “Minutes of Meeting at Historian’s Office, April 4, 1860”:

“There are certain points,” he said, “taught by Bro. Y as being true that there does seem to be disputed between those & the Revel[at]ions]

& when I reflect that there is—item upon item, doctrine upon doctrine—I would be a hypocrite if I came out & said that these [are] views on which I have strong faith [I] would be acting too much a hypocrite, . . . I would like to ennumerate [those] items. first preached & publish[ed] that Adam is the fa[ther] of our spirits, & father of Spirit & father of our bodies. When I read the Rev[elations] given to Joseph I read directly the opposite.

“Your statements to night,” Young retorted, “you came out to night and place them as charges, & have as many against me as I have [against] you. One thing I have thought I might still have ommited,” he said. “It was Joseph’s doctrine that Adam was God when in Luke Johnson’s . . . Joseph could not reveal what was revealed to him, if Joseph had it revealed, he was told not to reveal it. . . .”

President Young threatened that if Apostle Pratt did not back down he would be “voted as a false teacher, & your false doctrines discarded. I love your integrity, but your ignorance is as great as any philosophers ought to be.”

The next day the church leaders met again and Pratt maintained:

. . . in regard to Adam being our Father and our God, I have not published it, altho I frankly say, I have no confidence in it, altho advanced by bro. Kimball in the stand, and afterwards approved by bro. Brigham . . . I have never intended to advance new ideas, but to keep within revelation. It is said the revelations given to Joseph Smith, answered them, and if Joseph would translate now, it would be so very different, if that was so, I should never know when I was right, in fourteen years hence, all the revelations of Brigham may be done away, but I do not admit it, The Lord deals with us on consistent principles, . . . (*Ibid*, p. 30)

On pages 31-32 of the same article, we find the following:

“It was the Father of Jesus Christ that was talking to Adam in the garden,” Pratt pressed on. “B. Young says that Adam was the Father of Jesus Christ, both of his spirit and Body, in his teachings from the stand. . . .”

Despite Hyde’s attempted reconciliation, Pratt remained uncompromising. “I have heard Brigham say,” he remarked, “that Adam is the Father of our Spirits, and he came here with his resurrected body, to fall for his children, and I said to him, it leads to an endless number of falls, . . . that is revolting to my feelings, . . . [A]nother item, I heard brother Young say that Jesus had a body, flesh and bones, before he came, he was born of the Virgin Mary, it was so contrary to every revelation given.”



Under a great deal of pressure from Brigham Young and other church leaders, Orson Pratt was finally forced to back down. Bergera says that “Throughout the ensuing years until Young’s death in 1877, conflict between the Apostle and his President submerged markedly, . . .” (*Ibid.*, p. 39). Nevertheless, “On 10 April 1875, some two years before Brigham Young’s death, the church President rearranged the order of seniority in the Quorum of the Twelve, placing three others before Pratt, though the latter chronologically preceded them based on date of original ordination to the quorum, Pratt did not succeed to the presidency as would have otherwise occurred if the order not been realigned. While Young maintained that such action was necessary because of Pratt’s 1842 excommunication, it would not be entirely incorrect to assume that Young was motivated by his unwillingness to permit Pratt’s eventual succession as Church President” (*Ibid.*, p. 40).

### Evidence on the Adam-God Doctrine Mounting

As time goes on, more and more evidence that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine is coming to light. In the face of this material, an increasing number of Mormon scholars are now willing to concede that the doctrine was taught. Even Apostle Bruce R. McConkie appears to be weakening. In a letter to “Honest Truth Seekers,” Apostle McConkie declared:

Some prophets—I say it respectfully—know more and have greater inspiration than others. Thus, if Brigham Young, who was one of the greatest of the prophets, said something about Adam which is out of harmony with what is in the Book of Moses and in Section 78, it is the scripture that prevails.

In a talk given at the BYU Marriott Center on June 1, 1980, Apostle McConkie severely attacked the Adam-God doctrine. If McConkie’s words were applied to Brigham Young, they would make him a false prophet who was in danger of losing his soul:

HERESY NO. 6 — There are those who believe, or say they believe, that Adam is our father and our God, that he is the father of our spirits and our bodies, and that he is the one we worship. The devil keeps this heresy alive as a means of obtaining converts to cultism. It is contrary to the whole plan of salvation set forth in the scriptures. Anyone who has read the Book of Moses and anyone who has received the temple endowment and who yet believes the Adam-God theory does not deserve to be saved.

In his article published in *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1979, Chris Vlachos not only presents a great deal of evidence to prove that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine, but he shows clearly that this was a serious violation of the commandment. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). He points out the grave implications for present-day Mormons:

While throughout the flow of Bible history we see God proclaiming that He alone is to be worshiped, at the same time we find prophets who were not of God taught the contrary. True prophets would never be found teaching the people to worship another god— whether it was a stone idol, an imaginary god dwelling in heaven, or a deified man. . . . when these living oracles of God spoke as prophets, they were moved to proclaim, “Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” . . .

Holding fast to these truths let us turn now to Brigham Young, a man who claimed for himself the station and office of prophet of God. Recent history records the lives of few men who have possessed the leadership qualities that Young exhibited. For thirty years he presided as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator over the Mormon Church, a people claiming to be led by prophets of God as in the days of ancient Israel. . . . Their priesthood claims sole possession of the authority or power needed to act on behalf of God, and they consider all other “Christian churches” to be in a state of apostasy, who at best teach a partial truth about the gospel of Christ. Now if Brigham Young, Mormon prophet from 1847 to 1877, were a false prophet all along, then the claims of those who have sought to derive their priesthood authority through him are empty and void. If Brigham taught false doctrine, that cuts the ground from under Mormonism’s claim of latter-day prophetic revelation and the Mormon Church is not divinely led. . . .

The Mormon Church must base the truth of her claims on the authenticity of Brigham’s calling. Yet, we shall see that Brigham Young, who presided over the Mormon Church longer than any other man, did indeed advance false doctrine that focused worship on a god other than the Lord God of Israel. . . .

An examination of the evidence, however, will admit to no other conclusion than that Brigham Young did teach that Adam was Heavenly Father, the Father of men’s spirits as well as the Father of Jesus Christ in the flesh. . . . The doctrine that he taught for over 25 years was false doctrine and the LDS Church admits this today. It has, in effect, sided with Orson Pratt and has adopted his arguments and views as being right. However, in doing this it has unknowingly admitted that Brigham was not an inspired prophet of God. . . .

The implications certainly are obvious. The claims of the Utah LDS Church utterly collapse when they claim to be the only true church and the sole possessor of God’s authority.

The Mormon, furthermore, faces the dilemma of being unable to be certain that his present prophet is advancing true doctrine. Perhaps the present teachings of the living prophet will be tomorrow’s false teachings of a dead prophet. Perhaps the present revelations which the modern President claims to have received will be swept under the carpet as was the revelation concerning Adam that Brigham Young claimed to have received from God.

Today’s Mormon cannot hide behind a testimony that the living prophet is advancing correct doctrine. His testimony holds no more weight than the strong testimonies which past members had concerning the truth of Brigham’s Adam-God teaching. . . .

This frightening dilemma in which the Mormon finds himself is not peculiar to him or to his people, but is the snare in which all men find themselves when they put their trust in men. To trust in the arm of flesh is really to have no hope at all. . . .

God invites all men today to place their trust in Him directly through His Son, Jesus Christ. Unlike a false prophet who teaches the people to follow a strange god, Jesus can be fully trusted to lead us to His Father. By His death, Christ has secured a place in the presence of God for all who place their trust in him. Those who trust Him can be absolutely sure that He will never fail. (pp. 94-96, 118, 119)



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He had received the Priesthood and the Kingdom and had been faithful in all things and gained his resurrection and his exaltation and was crowned with glory, immortality and eternal lives and was numbered with the gods for such he became through his faithfulness, and had begotten all the spirits that was borne to this earth, and Eve our common Mother who is the mother of all living mortals spirits in the celestial world, and when this earth was organized by Elohim: Phoral & Michael who is Adam our common Father, Adam & Eve had the privilege to continue the work of progression, consequently came to this earth and commenced the great work of forming tabernacles for their spirits to dwell in, and when Adam and those that assisted him had completed this Kingdom on earth he came to it, and slept and awoke all and became like an infant child as is said by Moses the historian that the Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam and took from his side a rib and formed the woman that Adam called Eve - this should be interpreted that the man Adam like all other men had the seed within him to propagate his species; but not the woman, she conceives the seed but she does not produce it, consequently she was taken from the side of Adam of her father, this explains the mystery of Moses' work & agrees in regard to Adam and Eve, Adam & Eve when they were placed on this earth were immortal beings with flesh, bones and sinews, but upon partaking of the fruit of

February 7, 1877

the earth while in the garden and cultivating the ground their bodies became changed from immortal to mortal beings with the blood, covering through their veins as the action of life -

Adam was not under transgression until after he partook of the forbidden fruit, this was necessary that they might begeth their man might be, the woman was found in transgression not the man - now in the law of sacrifice we have the promise of a savior, and man had the privilege and showed forth his obedience by offering of the first fruits of the earth and the firstlings of the flocks, this as a showing that Jesus would come and shed his blood.

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John Adam's oldest son (Jesus the savior) who is the heir of the family is John Adam's first begotten in the spirit world, who according to the flesh is the only begotten as it is written, (in his divinity - he having come back into the spirit world, and come in the spirit to Mary and she conceived for when Adam and Eve got through with their work in this earth they did not

A photograph from the "Journal of L. John Nuttall," Feb. 7, 1877. Notice that Brigham Young's "special secretary" recorded that Young taught Jesus was the son of Adam.