

**LDS APOSTLE CONFESSES
BRIGHAM YOUNG
TAUGHT ADAM-GOD DOCTRINE**



**A Startling Letter Written by Apostle
Bruce R. McConkie and Other Important Documents**

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Contents

Introduction

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Part 1

A photographic reproduction of a letter written by the Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie.

Part 2

Photographs from manuscripts in the Church Archives which prove Brigham Young taught the Adam-God Doctrine. These documents were suppressed for a century.

Part 3

Typescript of an original document in the Church Archives which is identified as “Minutes of Council of the Twelve in Upper Room of Historian’s Office,” April 5, 1860. Proves that Brigham Young and the Apostle Orson Pratt fought over the Adam-God Doctrine.

Part 4

A reproduction of Chapter 10 from the book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner.

Introduction

On February 19, 1981, the Mormon Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie wrote a letter to Eugene England which contains some remarkable statements concerning Brigham Young (the 2nd President of the Mormon Church) and his Adam-God doctrine. In this 10-page letter, Apostle McConkie frankly admitted, “Yes, President Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits and all the related things that the cultists ascribe to him.” Those who are acquainted with Mormon theology will recognize that this is an admission that Brigham Young taught that Adam was God the Father. (See photographs of McConkie’s letter in Part 1 of this booklet.) Apostle McConkie’s revealing statements seem to mark the end of a cover-up which has lasted for over a hundred years.

When we began our research on Mormonism, the General Authorities of the Church emphatically denied that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine. On May 13, 1966, Hugh B. Brown, a member of the First Presidency, wrote a letter in which he claimed that Brigham Young was misquoted: “The Adam-God doctrine is not the doctrine of the Church, and the reports on that subject as published in the Journal of Discourses are not accurate.” Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the 10th President of the Church, said that “in all probability the sermon was erroneously transcribed!” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, p. 96). The Mormon Apostle, Mark E. Petersen also referred to “the misquotation of President Young” concerning the Adam-God doctrine (*Adam: Who Is He?* 1979, p. 17). In our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* we demonstrated that it was ridiculous to claim that Brigham Young was misquoted in his Church’s own publications. Furthermore, we presented new evidence from the journals of early Mormon leaders which demonstrated conclusively that Brigham Young taught that Adam was God and that Jesus Christ was his son. Although the Mormon Apostle, LeGrand Richards threatened to sue us if we printed some of the information found in his great-grandfather’s journal, we included it in *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* A number of Mormon fundamentalists have done research on the matter and have added a great deal of additional material. Finally, in 1979, Chris Alex Vlachos produced an extremely important article on the Adam-God doctrine. He brought to light unpublished documents from the LDS Church Archives which showed that there was a long and bitter argument between Brigham Young and the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt over the Adam-God doctrine. Gary James Bergera also prepared an excellent study of the conflict between Young and Pratt (see *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1980). Finally, in 1982, the Mormon scholar David John Buerger addressed the subject of the Adam-God doctrine in a long article published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. In this article, Mr. Buerger brought to light some new and important information. He concluded his article by stating:

The Adam-God doctrine has been a sensitive subject for most Latter-day Saints from the very day it was introduced to the Church. It is apparent that a substantial—and ultimately a dominant—number of Mormons rejected what Brigham Young held to be one of the “precious things of the kingdom.” For Young clearly believed that Adam was the father of the spirits of mankind in addition to being the first procreator of mankind’s physical bodies; that Adam came to this earth as a resurrected and exalted being; that he “fell” to a mortal state of existence in order to procreate mortal bodies; and that Adam was the spiritual and physical father of Jesus Christ. . . . If one accepts at face value the sermons of President Young and his colleagues, and their successors, on Adam-God, it is apparent that official (or even quasi-official) teachings on the subject have undergone considerable change. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1982, p. 45)

In the 1982 edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* we observed:

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.” (*Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* p. 178-C)

Although we felt Bruce R. McConkie was softening his position on the Adam-God doctrine, we never dreamed that he would completely cave in on the issue. We must admit, in fact, that we were astonished when we read his letter to Eugene England. Although the General Authorities of the Church had stubbornly fought against the ideas expressed in chapter 10 of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* for many years, we suddenly found ourselves gazing on a letter written by a Mormon Apostle which verified almost everything we had written in that chapter. (We have reproduced this chapter as Part 4 of this booklet.) Apostle McConkie began his letter by stating: “This may well be the most important letter you have or will receive.” On page 4 he calls the Adam-God doctrine a false doctrine, but he admits that it is based on “plain and clear quotations” which are found in the Church’s own literature:

In that same devotional speech I said: “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.” I, of course, indicated the utter absurdity of this doctrine and said it was totally false.

Since then I have received violent reactions from Ogden Kraut and other cultists in which they have expounded upon

the views of Brigham Young and others of the early Brethren relative to Adam. They have plain and clear quotations saying all of the things about Adam which I say are false. The quotations are in our literature and form the basis of a worship system followed by many of the cultists who have been excommunicated from the Church.

On the same page, Apostle McConkie goes on to quote from a speech he gave at Brigham Young University on June 1, 1980, in which he equates the Adam-God doctrine with the worship of idols or false gods: "There are those who bow before idols of wood and stone, and others who lisp their petitions to icons and images. There are those who worship cows and crocodiles, and others who acclaim Adam or Allah or Buddha as their Supreme Being."

On pages 5 and 6, Bruce R. McConkie holds up Brigham Young as a great prophet, but then he has to concede that he taught false doctrine with regard to Adam:

... I am a great admirer of Brigham Young and a great believer in his doctrinal presentations. He was called of God. He was guided by the Holy Spirit in his teachings in general. He was a mighty prophet. He led Israel the way the Lord wanted his people led. He built on the foundation laid by the Prophet Joseph. He completed his work and has gone on to eternal exaltation.

Nonetheless, as Joseph Smith so pointedly taught, a prophet is not always a prophet, only when he is acting as such. Prophets are men and they make mistakes. Sometimes they err in doctrine. This is one of the reasons the Lord has given us the Standard Works. They become the standards and rules that govern where doctrine and philosophy are concerned. If this were not so, we would believe one thing when one man was president of the Church and another thing in the days of his successors. Truth is eternal and does not vary. Sometimes even wise and good men fall short in the accurate presentation of what is truth. Sometimes a prophet gives personal views which are not endorsed and approved by the Lord.

Yes, President Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits, and all the related things that the cultists ascribe to him. This [i.e., Brigham Young's teaching on Adam], however, is not true. He expressed views that are out of harmony with the gospel. But, be it known, Brigham Young also taught accurately and correctly, the status and position of Adam in the eternal scheme of things. What I am saying is, that Brigham Young, contradicted Brigham Young, and the issue becomes one of which Brigham Young we will believe. The answer is we will believe the expressions that accord with the teachings in the Standard Works.

On page 7 of his letter, Apostle McConkie went so far as to say that if Mormons follow the "false portions" of Brigham Young's doctrines, they are in danger of losing their souls:

This puts me in mind of Paul's statement: "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor. 11:19). I do not know all of the providences of the Lord, but I do know that he permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church and that such teaching is part of the sifting process of mortality. We will be judged by what we believe among other things. If we believe false doctrine, we will be condemned. If that belief is on basic and fundamental things, it will lead us astray and we will lose our souls. This is why Nephi said: "And all those who preach false doctrines, . . . wo, wo, wo be unto them, saith the Lord God Almighty, for they shall be thrust down to hell!" (2 Ne. 28:15). This clearly means that people who teach false doctrine in the fundamental and basic things will lose their souls. The nature and kind of being that God is, is one of these fundamentals. I repeat: Brigham Young erred in some of his statements on the nature and kind of being that God is and as

to the position of Adam in the plan of salvation, but Brigham Young also taught the truth in these fields on other occasions. And I repeat, that in his instance, he was a great prophet and has gone on to eternal reward. What he did is not a pattern for any of us. If we choose to believe and teach the false portions of his doctrines, we are making an election that will damn us.

According to Bruce R. McConkie's reasoning, Brigham Young could teach the Adam-God doctrine and go "on to eternal reward," but those who accept this doctrine today stand in danger of losing their souls. While Apostle McConkie threatens Mormons who believe the Adam-God doctrine with damnation, Brigham Young gave the same warning to those who rejected it. After stating that Adam "is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do," President Young declared: "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). While we feel that Bruce R. McConkie is correct in denouncing the Adam-God doctrine, if we were to accept Brigham Young as a prophet we would have to believe that McConkie is the one who is in danger of losing his soul. Apostle McConkie has certainly made "light" of Brigham Young's teachings concerning Adam. In his letter (page 4) he speaks of the "utter absurdity" of the Adam-God doctrine and claims that it is "totally false." In a speech given at Brigham Young University on "The Seven Deadly Heresies," published in *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1980, page 78, McConkie maintained that the "devil" was responsible for keeping this "heresy" alive. The published version of this speech has even been toned down from the way it was originally given. In a copy of the speech distributed by the Ogden Institute of Religion, Weber State College, we find the following:

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. Those ensnared by it reject the living prophet and close their ears to the apostles of their day. "We will follow those who went before," they say. (Talk of Bruce R. McConkie at Marriott Center, 14-Stake Fireside, June 1, 1980, p. 5)

While Apostle McConkie refers to the Adam-God doctrine as "heresy" and says that the "devil" keeps it alive, President Brigham Young claimed that it came directly from God. Over twenty years after he first publicly proclaimed the Adam-God doctrine, Brigham Young emphasized that God Himself had revealed the doctrine to him:

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 . . . (*Deseret News Weekly*, June 18, 1873)

On October 8, 1861, Brigham Young said: "Some years ago, I advanced a doctrine with regard to Adam being our father and God, . . . It is one of the most glorious revelations of the economy of heaven, . . ." ("A Few Words of Doctrine," unpublished manuscript in the Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives, as cited by David John Buerger in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1982, p. 29). The Mormon Church's own publication, *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*,

clearly stated that the Adam-God doctrine was the word of the Lord: "... Adam is our Father and God, ... the prophet and Apostle Brigham Young has declared it, ... it is the word of the Lord" (Vol. 16, p. 534).

Brigham Young was certainly not the only early Mormon leader who had a testimony to the doctrine. Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, claimed that, "[T]he Lord told me that Adam was my father and that he was the God and father of all the inhabitants of this earth" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1982, p. 27). George Q. Cannon, who later became a member of the First Presidency, claimed the doctrine was revealed to him. David John Buerger informs us that, "In an 1870 meeting, 'Elder Geo[rge] Q. Cannon fully endorsed the doctrine that Father Adam was our God and Father. . . . Indeed, 'the above doctrine had been revealed to him, so that he knew it was true'" (Ibid., p. 31). Joseph Fielding Smith, who later became the 6th President of the Church, also endorsed the doctrine: "In another meeting of the School three years later, Daniel Wells of the First Presidency asked his colleagues whether they endorsed the 'doctrine pertaining to Adam being our Father & our God.' He personally 'bore a powerful testimony to the truth of the doctrine, remarking that if ever he had received a testimony of any doctrine in this church he had of the truth of this. The Endowments plainly teach it and the Bible & other revelations are full of it.' Others who 'approved or endorsed' the doctrine at the meeting were Henry Grow, D. B. Huntington, John Lyon, George B. Wallace, and Joseph F. Smith, the latter stating that 'the enunciation of that doctrine gave him great joy'" (Ibid., p. 31).

David John Buerger points out that many Church leaders continued to believe the Adam-God doctrine after Brigham Young's death. Even Lorenzo Snow, who became the 5th President of the Church, still maintained a belief in the doctrine a number of years after Brigham Young's death: "Contrary to many later perceptions, Brigham Young's death in late August 1877 did not mark the end of the Adam-God doctrine. . . . many of the Church's leading authorities unquestionably retained a belief in Brigham's teachings (others apparently did not). . . . Beyond Authorities George Q. and Abraham H. Cannon and Edward Stevenson, in the 1890s one also finds brief but supportive references to the doctrine by Apostles Brigham Young, Jr., Franklin D. Richards and Lorenzo Snow. Amidst discussions treated below, for example, Snow is reported as leading 'out on Adam being our Father and God. How beautiful the thought it brot. God nearer to us.' To this Richards added that 'it made him thrill through his whole body it was new & it was inspiring'" (Ibid., pp. 33-34).

As time went on, of course, the Mormon leaders said less and less about Brigham Young's teachings on Adam. In 1897, the Apostle Franklin D. Richards wrote a letter in which he remarked: "The Council did not deem it wise to lay out any line of procedure in which to deal with the subject, but felt that it is best to avoid bringing it up, . . . This, like many other points of more advanced doctrine, is too precious a pearl to be cast before swine. But when the swine get hold of them, let us rescue them by the help of the Spirit as best we can. Thinking it may be convenient to you to have President Young's sayings on that subject, I enclose a copy from his sermon in the first Volume of the *Journal of Discourses*" (Letter from Apostle Franklin D. Richards to Ephraim H. Nye, dated December 18, 1897, as cited in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1982, p. 37).

If Bruce R. McConkie had lived in the days of Brigham Young, he would have found himself in hot water because of his opposition to the Adam-God doctrine. Apostle Orson Pratt,

who was contemporary with Brigham Young, got into serious trouble because he made statements which are similar to those which have come from the pen of McConkie.

Another doctrine which Brigham Young taught that Bruce R. McConkie opposes is the idea that God progresses in knowledge. In a sermon delivered in the Tabernacle on January 13, 1867, Brigham Young stated: "... Brother Orson Pratt, has in theory, bounded the capacity of God. According to his theory, God can progress no further in knowledge and power; but the God that I serve is progressing eternally, and so are his children; they will increase to all eternity, if they are faithful" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 11, p. 286). According to Gary James Bergera, Brigham Young "warned Pratt that his interpretation of the omniscience of God 'was a fals doctrin & not true that thare never will be a time to all Eternity when all the God[s] of Eternity will seace advancing in power knowledge experience & Glory for if this was the case Eternity would seace to be & the glory of God would come to an End but all of celestial beings will continue to advance in knowledge & power worlds without end'" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1980, pp. 12-13). On another occasion Brigham Young said that Pratt's idea that God does not progress in knowledge was "fals doctrin For the God[s] & all intelligent beings would never seace to learn except it was the Sons of Perdition they would continue to decrease untill they became dissolved back into their native Element & lost their Identity'" (Ibid., p. 15).

In his letter to Eugene England, Apostle McConkie wrote:

On Sunday, June 1, 1980, I spoke at one of the multi-stake firesides in the Marriot Center on the subject, "The Seven Deadly Heresies." In that talk I said:

"There are those who say that God is progressing in knowledge and is learning new truths.

"This is false—utterly, totally, and completely. There is not one sliver of truth in it." (page 2)

On page 5 of the same letter, McConkie cites a speech he gave in which he suggested that the idea of God progressing in knowledge "borders on blasphemy":

How belittling it is—it borders on blasphemy—to demean the Lord God Omnipotent by saying he is an idol, or an image, or an animal, or a spirit essence, or that he is ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of all truth.

On pages 6 and 7, Apostle McConkie says that Brigham Young will have "to account" for his teaching concerning God progressing in knowledge:

Yes, Brigham Young did say some things about God progressing in knowledge and understanding, but again, be it known, that Brigham Young taught emphatically and plainly, that God knows all things and has all power meaning in the infinite, eternal and ultimate and absolute sense of the word. Again, the issue is, which Brigham Young shall we believe and the answer is: We will take the one whose statements accord with what God has revealed in the Standard Works.

I think you can give me credit for having a knowledge of the quotations from Brigham Young relative to Adam, . . . I think you can also give me credit for knowing what Brigham Young said about God progressing. And again, that is something he will have to account for. As for me and my house, we will have the good sense to choose between the divergent teachings of the same man and come up with those that accord with what God has set forth in his eternal plan of salvation.

Apostle McConkie seems to be threatening Eugene England with some type of serious ecclesiastical action if he continues to disseminate Brigham Young's doctrine concerning the progression of God. On page 2 he warns:

I want you to know that I am extending to you the hand of fellowship though I hold over you at the same time, the scepter of judgment.

On pages 8 and 9 of the same letter, McConkie gives this threatening admonition:

If it is true, as I am advised, that you speak on this subject of the progression of God at firesides and elsewhere, you should cease to do so. If you give other people copies of the material you sent me, with the quotations it contains, you should cease to do so. . . .

Now, I think I have said enough in this letter so that if you are receptive and pliable, you will get the message. . . . Perhaps I should tell you what one of the very astute and alert General Authorities said to me when I chanced to mention to him the subject of your letter to me. He said: "Oh dear, haven't we rescued him enough times already."

The Mormon Apostle Heber C. Kimball once said: "But if you are told by your leader to do a thing, do it. None of your business whether it is right or wrong" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, p. 32). The ward teacher's message for June 1945 contained this admonition:

Any Latter-day Saint who denounces or opposes, whether actively or otherwise, any plan or doctrine advocated by the "prophets, seers, and revelators" of the Church is cultivating the spirit of apostasy. . . . Lucifer . . . wins a great victory when he can get members of the Church to speak against their leaders and to "do their own thinking." . . .

When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a plan—it is God's plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy. (*Improvement Era*, June 1945, p. 354)

Some people feel that these statements do not really represent the thinking of the present leaders of the Church. Apostle McConkie, however, makes it very plain that all judgment concerning doctrine should come from the top leadership of the Church. On pages 8 and 9 of his letter to Eugene England, McConkie makes these emphatic statements:

It is not in your province to set in order the Church or to determine what its doctrines shall be. It is axiomatic among us to know that God has given apostles and prophets "for the edifying of the body of Christ," . . . This means, among other things, that it is my province to teach to the Church what the doctrine is. It is your province to echo what I say or to remain silent. You do not have a divine commission to correct me or any of the Brethren. The Lord does not operate that way. If I lead the Church astray, that is my responsibility, but the fact still remains that I am the one appointed with all the rest involved so to do. The appointment is not given to the faculty at Brigham Young University or to any of the members of the Church. . . . those at the head of the Church have the obligation to teach that which is in harmony with the Standard Works. If they err then be silent on the point and leave the event in the hands of the Lord. . . . if we want to save our own souls we need to strive with all the power we have to be in harmony with the revelations and not to be teaching or promulgating doctrines that suit our fancy.

I advise you to take my counsel on the matters here involved. If I err, that is my problem; but in your case if you single out some of these things and make them the center of your philosophy, and end up being wrong, you will lose your soul. . . .

Now I hope you will ponder and pray and come to a basic understanding of fundamental things and that unless and until you can on all points, you will remain silent on those where differences exist between you and the Brethren. This is

the course of safety. I advise you to pursue it. If you do not, perils lie ahead.

Notice that Apostle McConkie would have members of the Church "remain silent" even if the General Authorities "lead the Church astray." If some members of the Mormon Church who lived in Brigham Young's day had not opposed the Adam-God doctrine, it would probably be the official doctrine of the Church today. This alone should be sufficient to show that McConkie's reasoning is fallacious. The Bible warns against such a teaching: "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm . . ." (Jeremiah 17:5).

Apostle McConkie's letter throws important light on a serious problem we pointed out in the 1982 edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 185-B. We demonstrated in that book that there is a great conflict among Mormon leaders concerning the importance of the four standard works—i.e., the Bible, Book of Mormon, *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price*. We pointed out that Apostle McConkie feels that the standard works should be the final authority for settling doctrinal controversies. Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve and next in line to lead the Church, has taken a stand that is diametrically opposed to McConkie's view. He dogmatically asserts that the "Living Prophet" is more important than the four standard works and that the most important reading material is found in the current Church magazines and the *Deseret News*. On February 26, 1980, President Benson made these comments at Brigham Young University:

Soon we will be honoring our Prophet on his 85th birthday. As a Church we sing the song, "We Thank Thee, Oh God, For A Prophet." Here then is the grand key—Follow the Prophet—and here now are Fourteen Fundamentals In Following the Prophet, the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FIRST: The Prophet is the Only Man Who Speaks For The Lord in Everything. . . .

SECOND: The Living Prophet is More Vital to Us Than The Standard Works. . . .

THIRD: The Living Prophet is More Important to Us Than a Dead Prophet. . . . the most important prophet so far as you and I are concerned is the one living in our day and age to whom the Lord is currently revealing His will for us. Therefore the most important reading we can do is in any of the words of the Prophet contained each week in the Church Section of the *Deseret News*, and any words of the Prophet contained each month in our Church magazines. Our marching orders for each six months are found in the General Conference addresses which are printed in the *Ensign* magazine. . . .

Beware of those who would pit the dead prophets against the living prophets, for the living prophets always take precedence. ("Fourteen Fundamentals In Following The Prophets," by President Ezra Taft Benson, BYU Devotional Assembly, February 26, 1980, pp. 1-5)

In his letter (pages 6-7), Apostle McConkie makes it very plain that he does not subscribe to Apostle Benson's idea concerning the statements of the "Living Prophet" being more important than the standard works:

Prophets are men and they make mistakes. Sometimes they err in doctrine. This is one of the reasons the Lord has given us the Standard Works. They become the standards and rules that govern where doctrine and philosophy are concerned. If this were not so, we would believe one thing when one man was President of the Church and another thing in the days of his successors. Truth is eternal and does not vary. . . .

Wise gospel students do not build their philosophies of life on quotations of individuals, even though those quotations came from presidents of the Church. Wise people anchor their doctrine on the Standard works.

It would appear that the views of Apostles McConkie and Benson are irreconcilable. Benson's idea appears to be the weakest of the two positions. As McConkie points out, Mormons who completely rely on everything spoken by the "Living Prophet" would tend to "believe one thing when one man was president of the Church and another thing in the days of his successors." Benson's view could lead to complete chaos within the Church. McConkie's view, on the other hand, is unrealistic. It does not take into consideration the way doctrines have developed in the Mormon Church. If Joseph Smith and the early Mormons had followed McConkie's rule, the doctrine of plural marriage would never have found a place in the Church. At the time the doctrine was first introduced, the standard works of the Church condemned the practice. The Book of Mormon warned: "Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord" (Book of Mormon, Jacob 2:24). At that time the *Doctrine and Covenants* also had a section which called polygamy a crime: "Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again" (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835 Ed., Sec. 101, v. 4).

If Joseph Smith had followed the teachings of the standard works, he could never have introduced polygamy into the Church. As it was, however, Joseph Smith and the other early leaders of the Church secretly practiced the doctrine. Over thirty years later (1876) the revelation on plural marriage (Section 132) was added to the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the section condemning it was deleted.

The change concerning blacks and the priesthood is another example of how the Mormon leaders can completely change a doctrine before a revelation is canonized in the standard works. Prior to 1978, Mormon leaders taught that blacks could not hold the priesthood. The Book of Abraham, part of the *Pearl of Great Price*, was cited as scriptural authority for this doctrine. Bruce R. McConkie himself wrote: "Negroes in this life are denied the priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty. The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them. . . . Negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned . . ." (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, p. 477).

By the late 1970s it became clear that the Mormon leaders could no longer resist the pressures that were being exerted against them. On June 9, 1978, they announced a very important change in their doctrine concerning blacks. They stated that blacks would now be given "all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords" (*Deseret News*, June 9, 1978).

Instead of waiting for the Church to approve the new "revelation" so that it could be canonized in the standard works, the Mormon leaders immediately opened the door so that blacks could be ordained. It was only two weeks after the "revelation" was announced that the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that a black man was married in the temple (see our book, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, page 313). The "revelation" was later voted on by the Church membership and canonized, but, of course, it would have been impossible to have reversed the procedure by the time this took place.

Now, while we feel that the Mormon leaders did a good thing when they changed the doctrine, they certainly did not follow Apostle McConkie's rule with regard to the standard works. McConkie apparently made no attempt to oppose the railroading through of this change in doctrine, and he has even condemned those who dissented:

There are statements in our literature by the early brethren which we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say, "You said such and such, and how is it now that we do such and such?" And all I can say to that is that it is time disbelieving people repented and go in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world. . . . We have now had added a new flood of intelligence and light on this particular subject, and it erases all the darkness. . . . It doesn't make a particle of difference what anybody ever said about the Negro matter before the first day of June of this year (1978). ("All Are Alike Unto God," by Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve, pp. 1-2)

Another curious aspect of Bruce K. McConkie's letter is his appeal to statements made "formally and officially, by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Lectures on Faith . . ." (page 3). These "Lectures on Faith" were officially placed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* and voted on by the Church in 1835. They were taken out of the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1921, but without an official vote to remove them. One of the reasons given for their removal was that "They are not complete as to their teachings regarding the Godhead." They teach that the Father is "a personage of Spirit," while the Son is described as "a personage of tabernacle." (For further information on this see *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* page 166.) If McConkie is going to use the Lectures on Faith as a standard for doctrine when it comes to the question of whether God progresses in knowledge, why could they not also be used to show that Joseph Smith's later teaching that God the "Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 130:22) is false doctrine?

In any case, while McConkie would like us to believe that the Church has always used the standard works to test the reliability of new doctrines, history reveals just the opposite. Joseph Smith himself was the greatest offender against McConkie's rule. He seemed to put forth almost any whim he had as doctrine and did not really care whether it agreed with the Bible, Book of Mormon or his other revelations.

Some of the most important teachings of the Mormon Church cannot be found in the standard works. For instance, Mormons believe that God has a wife, yet Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the 10th President of the Church, had to admit that there "is no reference to a mother in heaven either in the Bible, Book of Mormon or *Doctrine and Covenants*, . . ." (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol. 3, p. 142). Smith felt, however, that this doctrine should be received because it makes "common sense." Bruce R. McConkie offers no support from the standard works but merely says that "This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church . . ." (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, p. 516). Mormon leaders also teach that God was once a man, but this cannot be substantiated from the four standard works. In a letter to Morris L. Reynolds, the Mormon Apostle, LeGrand Richards quotes the statement, "As man is, God once was," but he has to admit it does not come from the standard works:

Your third question: "How can we become like a God who is ever increasing and progressing?" There is a statement often repeated in the Church, and while it is not in one of the Standard Church Works, it is accepted as Church doctrine, and this is: "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become." Now that simply means, if we interpret it correctly, that we can become a god, even a son of god, as the scriptures indicate; but it does not mean that we will ever be equal with God in the sense that we can gain the knowledge that He will have; as we progress in knowledge, He also will progress, and since there will never come a time when we will cease to learn, we will never really catch up to Him but that does not change the fact that as God is, we can become in the sense that we can become gods as He is God, but He will always be our superior. (Letter by Apostle LeGrand Richards, dated July 14, 1966)

It is interesting to note that the Apostle LeGrand Richards seems to be teaching that God is progressing in knowledge ("as we progress in knowledge, He also will progress"). This is the very doctrine which Bruce R. McConkie referred to as "false—utterly, totally, and completely." We wonder if McConkie has ever warned his fellow Apostle that he is making the mistake of believing one of "the false portions" of Brigham Young's doctrines, and that those who do this could "lose their souls." We feel that Apostle McConkie would do well to see that the other Apostles are not teaching false doctrines before he raises "the scepter of judgment" over the head of Eugene England.

Now that Apostle McConkie has admitted that "President Young did teach" the Adam-God doctrine, Mormons should seriously consider the grave implications of the matter. This teaching is clearly a violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). In Deuteronomy, chapter 13, the Israelites were warned:

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;

Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)

In his book, *Mormon Doctrine*, page 270, Apostle McConkie says: "There is no salvation in the worship of false gods. For such false worship the Lord imposed the death penalty in ancient Israel (Deut. 13:6-11)." Since McConkie admits that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine and says that those who believe it today do "not deserve to be saved," we do not see how he can still maintain that Brigham Young was "a mighty prophet." We feel that there is only one conclusion that an unbiased person could possibly reach—i.e., Brigham Young was a false prophet who tried to lead his people into serving another god. In his article on the Adam-God doctrine, Chris Vlachos points out that "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."

When we first received Apostle McConkie's letter we were only thinking of printing some quotations from it, but as we examined this remarkable document more closely, we became convinced that it should be in the hands of the public. Some may feel that the publication of this letter will tend to stir up more trouble for Eugene England. (McConkie has already stated that he holds "the scepter of judgment" over England's head, and this could possibly relate to the loss of his membership in the Church and/or his job as associate professor in the English Department at Brigham Young University.) We feel, however, that our publication of the letter will undoubtedly provide protection for England. Bruce R. McConkie will probably think twice about making a rash move if he knows many people are aware of the situation. This would be very bad public relations for the Church. We probably should also state that Mr. England did not provide us with the copy of the letter which we have used for printing. We do not know whether the original letter is stamped "DO NOT REPRODUCE." We believe, however, that if it appears on the original copy, it was added after it left McConkie's office by someone who realized the sensitivity of the material it contains. We are told that there is another copy of McConkie's letter which does not have these words stamped on it. The reader will notice that in the postscript to the letter, Bruce R. McConkie stated that he was "sending copies of this response to those to whom you sent your communication." The reader will notice a great deal of underlining in the letter. We suspect that most of it was added after the letter left McConkie's office.

In Part 2 of this booklet we have photographs of manuscripts in the Church Archives which prove that Brigham Young taught that Adam was God and that Jesus Christ was his son. These documents, which were suppressed for a century, absolutely destroy the argument that Brigham Young was misquoted on the Adam-God doctrine.

Part 3 contains a typescript of a document identified as the "Minutes of Council of the Twelve in upper room of Historian's Office," April 5, 1860. A photograph of one of the pages of the original manuscript is also included. This is an extremely interesting manuscript, for it throws a great deal of light on the dispute that Apostle Orson Pratt had with President Brigham Young over the nature of God. In these minutes Pratt voices his objections to the Adam-God doctrine and to the idea that God progresses in knowledge. The reader will notice that Pratt stands all alone as the other Apostles attack him for questioning Brigham Young. If Apostle McConkie had lived in the days of Brigham Young and had advanced the ideas which appear in his speeches, books and letters, he would have found himself facing the same stiff opposition that Pratt encountered. He undoubtedly would have been reprimanded by the other Church leaders and some of his writings would have been destroyed or censored.

Part 4 contains a reproduction of chapter 10 from the 1982 [2008] edition of our book, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* This chapter contains a detailed discussion of the Adam-God doctrine and its implications for members of the Church today.

Jerald and Sandra Tanner
Modern Microfilm Company
October 11, 1982

Part 1

A photographic reproduction of a letter written
by the Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Council of the Twelve
47 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

February 19, 1981

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Mr. Eugene England
C/O Honors Program
4012 Harold B. Lee Library
Provo, Utah 84602

Dear Brother England:

This may well be the most important letter you have or will receive. It is written in reply to an undated letter from you which came in an envelope postmarked, September 4, 1980. Your letter enclosed a 19-page document which you had prepared under the title, "The Perfection and Progression of God: Two Spheres of Existence and Two Modes of Discourse."

In your letter and the article enclosed with it, you set forth the thesis that although God knows all things as pertaining to our sphere of existence, there are nonetheless other spheres beyond ours in which Deity continues to advance and progress in knowledge and truth. In espousing and explaining this philosophy you suppose you are harmonizing quotations from various of the early Brethren. Some of these statements emphatically say that God knows all things and has all power and others of them say that he is advancing in knowledge and understanding and is gaining new truths.

When your letter arrived I was aware of the subject material contained in it and in the enclosed article. Because I do not engage in controversy or discussion of divergent views, either orally or in writing, I simply dropped your letter in a drawer and did not bother to read it. Some four and a half months later, in January of this year, I did read your presentation for the first time. I was not at all pleased, but still thought I would have nothing to say to you on the subject.

Over the months various hearsay reports have come to me indicating that you are presenting and championing the views you sent to me. I have now reached the conclusion that it would be wise for me to depart from my usual custom and send you an answer to your letter. I do so out of respect for your parents, G. Eugene and Dora, and for your own personal well-being and for your guidance where your teachings and discussions with others are concerned.

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I shall write in kindness and in plainness and perhaps with sharpness. I want you to know that I am extending to you the hand of fellowship though I hold over you at the same time, the scepter of judgment. My office door is open to you and if you feel the need for discussion with me, my secretary will be pleased to set up a mutually convenient time or times for such.

On Sunday, June 1, 1980, I spoke at one of the multi-stake firesides in the Marriott Center on the subject, "The Seven Deadly Heresies." In that talk I said:

"There are those who say that God is progressing in knowledge and is learning new truths."

"This is false--utterly, totally, and completely. There is not one sliver of truth in it. It grows out of a wholly twisted and incorrect view of the King Follet Sermon and of what is meant by eternal progression."

"God progresses in the sense that his kingdoms increase and his dominions multiply--not in the sense that he learns new truths and discovers new laws. God is not a student. He is not a laboratory technician. He is not postulating new theories on the basis of past experiences. He has indeed graduated to that state of exaltation that consists of knowing all things and having all power."

"The life that God lives is named eternal life. His name, one of them, is 'Eternal,' using that word as a noun and not as an adjective, and he uses that name to identify the type of life that he lives. God's life is eternal life, and eternal life is God's life. They are one and the same. Eternal life is the goal we shall obtain if we believe and obey and walk uprightly before him. And eternal life consists of two things. It consists of life in the family unit, and, also, of inheriting, receiving, and possessing the fulness of the glory of the Father. Anyone who has each of these things is an inheritor and possessor of the greatest of all gifts of God, which is eternal life."

"Eternal progression consists of living the kind of life God lives and of increasing in kingdoms and dominions everlastingly. Why anyone should suppose that an infinite and eternal being, who has presided in our universe for almost 2,555,000,000 years, who made the sidereal heavens, whose creations are more numerous than the particles of the earth, and who is aware of the fall of every sparrow--why anyone would suppose that such a being has more to learn and new truths to discover in the laboratories of eternity is totally beyond my comprehension."

"Will he one day learn something that will destroy the plan of salvation and turn man and the universe into an uncreated nothingness? Will he discover a better plan of salvation than the

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one he has already given to men in worlds without number?

"The saving truth, as revealed to and taught, formally and officially, by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Lectures on Faith is that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He knows all things, he has all power, and he is everywhere present by the power of his Spirit. And unless we know and believe this doctrine we cannot gain faith unto life and salvation.

"Joseph Smith also taught in the Lectures on Faith 'that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. These he named as:

1. "The idea that he actually exists';
2. "'A correct idea of his character, perfections, and attributes'; and
3. "'An actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to the divine will.'

"The attributes of God are given as knowledge, faith or power, justice, judgment, mercy, and truth. The perfections of God are named as 'the perfections which belong to all of the attributes of his nature,' which is to say that God possesses and has all knowledge, all faith or power, all justice, all judgment, all mercy, and all truth. He is indeed the very embodiment, personification, and source of all these attributes. Does anyone suppose that God can be more honest than he already is? Neither need any suppose there are truths he does not know or knowledge he does not possess.

"Thus Joseph Smith taught, and these are his words:

'Without the knowledge of all things, God would not be able to save any portion of his creatures, for it is by reason of the knowledge which he has of all things, from the beginning to the end, that enables him to give that understanding to his creatures by which they are made partakers of eternal life; and if it were not for the idea existing in the minds of men that God had all knowledge it would be impossible for them to exercise faith in him.' (Cited, Mormon Doctrine, p. 264.)

"If God is just dabbling with a few truths he has already chanced to learn or experimenting with a few facts he has already discovered, we have no idea as to the real end and purpose of creation."

The foregoing quotation is from the published version of the talk. As it was actually given it included the following

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paragraph: "Will he one day learn something that will destroy the plan of salvation and turn man and the universe into an uncreated nothingness? Will he discover a better plan of salvation than the one he has already given to men in worlds without number? I have been sorely tempted to say at this point that any who so suppose have the intellect of an ant and the understanding of a clod of miry clay in a primordial swamp--but of course I would never say a thing like that." I deliberately deleted the last quoted sentence because it does not come out in print the way it was expressed by voice. It was said in such a tone as to draw laughter from the congregation and is of course, a normal use of hyperbole.

* In that same devotional speech I said: "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." I, of course, indicated the utter absurdity of this doctrine and said it was totally false.

Since then I have received violent reactions from Ogden Kraut and other cultists in which they have expounded upon the views of Brigham Young and others of the early Brethren relative to Adam. They have plain and clear quotations saying all of the things about Adam which I say are false. The quotations are in our literature and form the basis of a worship system followed by many of the cultists who have been excommunicated from the Church. I also received, of course, your material in which you quote from Brigham Young and others of the early Brethren saying that God is progressing in knowledge. *

I assume that you were aware of the foregoing quotations when you wrote me in September of 1980. In the October 1980 General Conference, without as yet having read your material, I said the following:

"True religion is found only where men worship the true and living God. False religion always results from the worship of false gods. Eternal life itself, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God, is available to those and those only who know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

"It is all the rage in this modern world to worship false gods of every sort and kind. There are those who bow before idols of wood and stone, and others who lisp their petitions to icons and images. There are those who worship cows and crocodiles, and others who acclaim Adam or Allah or Buddha as their Supreme Being.

"There are those who apply the names of Deity to some spirit essence that is immaterial, uncreated and unknowable and

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that fills the immensity of space and is everywhere and nowhere in particular present.

"And there are even those who champion the almost unbelievable theory that God is an Eternal Student enrolled in the University of the Universe where he is busily engaged in learning new truths and amassing new and strange knowledge that he never knew before."

"How belittling it is--it borders on blasphemy--to demean the Lord God Omnipotent by saying he is an idol, or an image, or an animal, or a spirit essence, or that he is ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of all truth."

"It is the first principle of revealed religion to know the nature and kind of being that God is. As for us: 'We know [and testify] that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them.' (D&C 20:17.)

"This great God, the Lord Almighty, is a personage of tabernacle. He 'has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's.' (D&C 130:22.) He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He has all power, knows all things, and, by the power of his Spirit, is in and through all things."

On Tuesday, February 17, 1981, I was the speaker at the BYU Devotional. My subject was "The Three Pillars of Eternity," under which heading I spoke of the creation, the fall and the atonement. With reference to the omnipotence and omniscience of God I said in that talk:

"Who is Elohim? He is God the Eternal Father. He is a glorified and exalted personage. He has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's. In the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He knows all things and has all power--not simply as pertaining to us or in some prescribed sphere or realm--but in the absolute, eternal, and unlimited sense. In the ultimate sense, he is the Creator. And anything you may have heard to the contrary, whether in the creeds of Christendom or the mouthings of intellectuals who, in their own eyes, know more than the Lord, is false."

✱ Now may I say something for your guidance and enlightenment. If what I am about to say should be taken out of context and published in Dialogue or elsewhere, it would give an entirely erroneous impression and would not properly present the facts. As it happens, I am a great admirer of Brigham Young and a great believer in his doctrinal presentations. He was called of God.

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He was guided by the Holy Spirit in his teachings in general. He was a mighty prophet. He led Israel the way the Lord wanted his people led. He built on the foundation laid by the Prophet Joseph. He completed his work and has gone on to eternal exaltation.

Nonetheless, as Joseph Smith so pointedly taught, a prophet is not always a prophet, only when he is acting as such. Prophets are men and they make mistakes. Sometimes they err in doctrine. This is one of the reasons the Lord has given us the Standard Works. They become the standards and rules that govern where doctrine and philosophy are concerned. If this were not so, we would believe one thing when one man was president of the Church and another thing in the days of his successors. Truth is eternal and does not vary. Sometimes even wise and good men fall short in the accurate presentation of what is truth. Sometimes a prophet gives personal views which are not endorsed and approved by the Lord.

Yes, President Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits, and all the related things that the cultists ascribe to him. This, however, is not true. He expressed views that are out of harmony with the gospel. But, be it known, Brigham Young also taught accurately and correctly, the status and position of Adam in the eternal scheme of things. What I am saying is, that Brigham Young, contradicted Brigham Young, and the issue becomes one of which Brigham Young we will believe. The answer is we will believe the expressions that accord with the teachings in the Standard Works.

Yes, Brigham Young did say some things about God progressing in knowledge and understanding, but again, be it known, that Brigham Young taught emphatically and plainly, that God knows all things and has all power meaning in the infinite, eternal and ultimate and absolute sense of the word. Again, the issue is, which Brigham Young shall we believe and the answer is: We will take the one whose statements accord with what God has revealed in the Standard Works.

I think you can give me credit for having a knowledge of the quotations from Brigham Young relative to Adam, and of knowing what he taught under the subject that has become known as the Adam God Theory. President Joseph Fielding Smith said that Brigham Young will have to make his own explanations on the points there involved. I think you can also give me credit for knowing what Brigham Young said about God progressing. And again, that is something he will have to account for. As for me and my house, we will have the good sense to choose between the divergent teachings of the same man and come up with those that accord with

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what God has set forth in his eternal plan of salvation.

This puts me in mind of Paul's statement: "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11:19.) I do not know all of the providences of the Lord, but I do know that he permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church and that such teaching is part of the sifting process of mortality. We will be judged by what we believe among other things. If we believe false doctrine, we will be condemned. If that belief is on basic and fundamental things, it will lead us astray and we will lose our souls. This is why Nephi said: "And all those who preach false doctrines, . . . wo, wo, wo be unto them, saith the Lord God Almighty, for they shall be thrust down to hell!" (2 Ne. 28:15.) This clearly means that people who teach false doctrine in the fundamental and basic things will lose their souls. The nature and kind of being that God is, is one of these fundamentals. I repeat: Brigham Young erred in some of his statements on the nature and kind of being that God is and as to the position of Adam in the plan of salvation, but Brigham Young also taught the truth in these fields on other occasions. And I repeat, that in his instance, he was a great prophet and has gone on to eternal reward. What he did is not a pattern for any of us. If we choose to believe and teach the false portions of his doctrines, we are making an election that will damn us.

It should be perfectly evident that under our system of church discipline, it would be anticipated that some others besides Brigham Young would pick up some of his statements and echo them. Those who did this, also on other occasions, taught accurately and properly what the true doctrines of the gospel are. I do not get concerned when a good and sound person who, on the over-all, is teaching the truth happens to err on a particular point and say something in conflict with what he has said himself on a previous occasion. We are all mortal. We are all fallible. We all make mistakes. No single individual all the time is in tune with the Holy Spirit, but I do get concerned when some person or group picks out false statements and makes them the basis of their presentation and theology and thus ends up having a false concept of the doctrine, which in reality, was not in the mind of the person whose quotations they are using.

Wise gospel students do not build their philosophies of life on quotations of individuals, even though those quotations come from presidents of the Church. Wise people anchor their doctrine on the Standard Works. When Section 20 says that God is infinite and eternal, it means just that and so on through all

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of the revelations. There is no need to attempt to harmonize conflicting views when some of the views are out of harmony with the Standard Works. This is what life is all about. The Lord is finding out what we will believe in spite of the allurements of the world or the philosophies of men or the seemingly rational and logical explanations that astute people make.

We do not solve our problems by getting a statement from the president of the Church or from someone else on a subject. We have been introduced to the gospel; we have the gift of the Holy Ghost; we have the Standard Works and it is our responsibility to get in tune and understand properly what the Lord has revealed and has had us canonize. The end result of this course of personally and individually pursuing light and truth is to reach that millennial state of which the scriptures say it will no longer be necessary for every man to say to his neighbor "know the Lord," for all shall know him from the greatest to the least. Joseph Smith says this will be by the spirit of revelation.

If it is true, as I am advised, that you speak on this subject of the progression of God at firesides and elsewhere, you should cease to do so. If you give other people copies of the material you sent me, with the quotations it contains, you should cease to do so. It is not in your province to set in order the Church or to determine what its doctrines shall be. It is axiomatic among us to know that God has given apostles and prophets "for the edifying of the body of Christ," and that their ministry is to see that "we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:11-16.) This means, among other things, that it is my province to teach to the Church what the doctrine is. It is your province to echo what I say or to remain silent. You do not have a divine commission to correct me or any of the Brethren. The Lord does not operate that way. If I lead the Church astray, that is my responsibility, but the fact still remains that I am the one appointed with all the rest involved so to do. The appointment is not given to the faculty at Brigham Young University or to any of the members of the Church. The Lord's house is a house of order and those who hold the keys are appointed to proclaim the doctrines.

Now you know that this does not mean that individuals should not do research and make discoveries and write articles. What it does mean is that what they write should be faith promoting and where doctrines are concerned, should be in harmony with that which comes from the head of the Church. And those at

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the head of the Church have the obligation to teach that which is in harmony with the Standard Works. If they err then be silent on the point and leave the event in the hands of the Lord. Some day all of us will stand before the judgment bar and be accountable for our teachings. And where there have been disagreements the Lord will judge between us. In the meantime if we want to save our own souls we need to strive with all the power we have to be in harmony with the revelations and not to be teaching or promulgating doctrines that suit our fancy.

I advise you to take my counsel on the matters here involved. If I err, that is my problem; but in your case if you single out some of these things and make them the center of your philosophy, and end up being wrong, you will lose your soul. One of the side effects of preaching contrary to what the Brethren preach is to get a spirit of rebellion growing up in your heart. This sort of thing cankers the soul spiritually. It drives people out of the Church. It weakens their faith. All of us need all of the faith and strength and spiritual stability we can get to maintain our positions in the Church and to work out our salvation.

Now, I think I have said enough in this letter so that if you are receptive and pliable, you will get the message. If you are not, rebellion will well up in your heart. I pray for your well-being. I repeat: the door to my office is open. Perhaps I should tell you what one of the very astute and alert General Authorities said to me when I chanced to mention to him the subject of your letter to me. He said: "Oh dear, haven't we rescued him enough times already."

Now I hope you will ponder and pray and come to a basic understanding of fundamental things and that unless and until you can on all points, you will remain silent on those where differences exist between you and the Brethren. This is the course of safety. I advise you to pursue it. If you do not, perils lie ahead. It is not too often in this day that any of us are told plainly and bluntly what ought to be. I am taking the liberty of so speaking to you at this time, and become thus a witness against you if you do not take the counsel.

I repeat: I have every good wish for you, pray that the Lord will bless you and hope that things will work out properly and well in your life.

Sincerely,

Bruce R. McConkie

Bruce R. McConkie

BRM:vh

Mr. Eugene England
February 19, 1981
Page 10

P.S. I am taking the liberty of sending copies of this response to those to whom you sent your communication.

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Part 2

Photographs from manuscripts in the Church Archives
which prove Brigham Young taught the Adam-God Doctrine.
These documents were suppressed for a century.

Feb 15th I spent the time in school at-attended the children meeting in the evening near one hundred were present & prayed & spoke & sang

16th I spent the time at home during the day in school & the evening with the children of the 19th ward

17th & 18th I spent the time trying to settle accounts

19th  Sunday E. D. Woolley was called upon to preach a final sermon or rather upon the resurrection of the dead in some of the saints had advanced some erroneous ideas concerning the resurrection Brother Woolley had some incorrect ideas when he closed President Young followed & made many good remarks he said that we should have the same benefit identical body that our spirits occupied while in this life our graves would literally be opened and our bodies come forth. the question was asked if children that died in infancy lost any thing He said No a person would not lose any thing they had not got children that died in infancy would be provided for in some way.

He said that our GOD was Father Adam He was the Father of the Savior Jesus Christ. Our God was no more or less than ADAM. Michael the Archangel I attended meeting in the prayer circle in the evening & then went & preached to the 18 ward.

20th I spent the day at home in school with my children

21st I spent the day in the Council House Eldon ^{Lyons} ~~Jennings~~ delivered a long and interesting address in the evening among his remarks he said when strong drink or any evil thing brings a man down from his dignity to a brute it has no power to exalt him I spent the evening with the 12 ward

22nd I spent the day at home & attended meeting in the evening at the 17 ward with the children & had a good time

23rd I spent the day at home with my children

24th I spent the day at home in the Council House and had an interesting discourse from Eldon ~~Jennings~~ ^{Lyons}

25th I spent the day at home with my children in school

26 Sunday we have a severe snow storm through this day I spent the day at home

27th The eastern mail came into day brought dates up to Dec 22nd containing the floating news of the day Europe is in war China in revolution Harpers week establishment burned up at New York with many other things out to move

A photograph from Wilford Woodruff's Journal, February 19, 1854. Woodruff later became the fourth President of the Church. At the place where the arrow points Woodruff quotes President Brigham Young as saying: "... our GOD was Father Adam He was the Father of the Savior Jesus Christ — Our God was no more or less than ADAM."

1701 He with his leaders Brother Pratt who 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 & made this world - Eve with him partook of the
fruits of the earth & begot children & they were earthly
& had mortal bodies & if we were faithful we should
become gods as they. He told Brother Pratt to lay aside his
philosophical reasoning & get revelation from God to govern
him & enlighten his mind more & it would be a great
blessing to him to lay aside his books & go into the canyons as
some of the rest of us was doing - it would be better for him
He said his philosophy injured him in a measure many good
things were said by President Young that we should grow up
in revelation so that principle would govern every action of our
lives. He had never found any difficulty in leading this
principle people since Joseph's death.

17th, 18th, 20th I spent this time drawing wood

22d & 23d I spent my time cutting up corn to snare
Indians fought with the Utahs & killed 6 & brought in
the Indian scalps on poles through our streets & held a
war dance

24th Sunday O Hyde preached in the forenoon & aft.
Gave in the afternoon our children very sick

25th to 27th I spent the time in drawing corn & making
fence

29th the mail came in today & brought me 4
letters from Bernhisht one from J. Z. Carter
one from W. H. Andrews. I called my matters
with Mr. Hornum through Middleton & Riley
who gave his note payable in 60 days & rode home
with Mr. Hornum & brought one yoke of oxen & paid
\$1000 dollars for them

30th I wrote 4 letters one to J. Z. Carter
one to W. H. Bernhisht one to W. H. Andrews
one to Sarah at South Wehkan

Oct 1st Sunday I attended meeting through the day &
preached in the evening

2d to 4th I spent the time in the canyons going
poles for fence

Oct 6th General Conference commenced this morn-
ing at 10 o'clock & continued till 10 o'clock

The Presidency were present - of the Twelve
apostles O. Hyde O. Pratt W. Woodruff J. C. Smith
C. J. Hanson J. S. Jones All the business of the conf.

A photograph from Wilfor Woodruff's Journal, September 17, 1854. Woodruff says that Apostle Orson Pratt "could not belie[ve] that Adam was our God or the Father of Jesus Christ — President You[n]g said that he was . . ."

Dec 11. 1869

down with his boat while going down basket 3 game was sent
out boat into it & when we could hide ourselves & not be shot,
would fly even on wings as we would shoot the snipe & wing
staid till dark then we went back to our wagon & disassembled
boats up on the dry land made up a fire cooked a clabber
pie & set out supper made our boat, in the boat & slept all night
the wind blew very hard we got up before day light on the
12. & took our boats & went back to our shooting place & went
way down a flock of geese came over & I shot into the
flock & hit them but it shot over to fire to kill them the
wind blew very hard most of the forenoon we shot till
the middle of the afternoon then we went up to our wagon
loaded our boats, into the wagon & prepared to leave when
at the hot spring lake Esra Dabbitt took our boat & came to
Etham Dabbitt & I carried it up to Esra Dabbitt's house
we counted our game & found we had 4 ducks & 3 geese
13. It went to Historian office & a number of the officers of the
I spent the remainder of the day at home with the school of the People
14. It spent the day at the school of the People of Endow
House we gave Endow to 2 of the people, H. B. Smith & seal
5 people of the school of the People.
15. Sunday I met with my Quorum in the morning &
attended a meeting of the Tahamucke the administration of the law
I spoke with D. H. Wall, & C. C. Garrison he was very dangerous
sight with the Congress of the Council, this is the 3rd of the
he has had this space the President in the 13 ward in the Council
16. It spent the day at home but it met with the school of the People
in the evening at the City Hall this school was organized on
the 9. Dec 14. 69 in the City Hall President Brigham Young was
appointed President Hoban E. B. Smith & Marshall H. Wall, vice President
E. L. Slater was appointed secretary & David A. Shull was Treasurer
President Young spoke of the first organization of this school by
the People of the People - the word of wisdom was given in the
school President Young said Adam was Michael the Archangel & he was the Father
of Jesus Christ & was our God & that Joseph taught [word illegible] this Principle
thought this Principle President Young D. H. Wall & C. C. Smith

A photograph from Wilford Woodruff's Journal, December 16, 1869. Woodruff quotes Brigham Young as saying that "Adam was Michael the Ar[c]h angel & he was the Father of Jesus Christ & was our God & that Joseph taught [word illegible] this Principl[e]."

or a fellow laborer of the saviours beget him, as to say the H Ghost beget him. — 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 days. Has he a Father? He has. — Had he a mother? He had. Now to say that the son of God was begotten by the Holy Ghost, is to say the Holy Ghost is God the Father, which is inconsistent, and contrary to all the revelations of God both Modern, and Ancient.

I silenced this erroneous doctrine a year ago last fall conference. It was I think, when a dispute arose among some of our best Elders, as to who was the Father of the Son of Man, pertaining to the flesh. Some contended it was the Holy Ghost, and some that it was Elohim. When I spoke upon it

be no end, but you shall add Kingdom to Kingdom,
and thrower to thrower; and still behold the vast amount
of unorganised matter. Adam then was a resurrected
being; and I reason;

Our spirits and the spirits of all the human
family were begotten by Adam, and born of Eve.

How are we going to know this?
I reason it.

And I reason that Adam came into the garden
of Eden, and did actually eat of the fruit that he himself
planted; and I reason there was a previous understand-
ing, and the whole plan was previously calculated. Before
the garden of Eden was made, that he would induce his
posterity to sin, misery, darkness, wickedness, wretched-
ness, and to the power of the Devil, that they might be
prepared for every affliction, for without this they could

A photograph of the handwritten copy of an address given by Brigham Young on October 8, 1854 (Brigham Young Papers, Ms d, 1234). Brigham Young says that "Our spirits and the spirits of all the human family were begotten by Adam, and born of Eve."

Part 3

Typescript of an original document in the Church Archives which is identified as “Minutes of Council of the Twelve in Upper Room of Historian’s Office,” April 5, 1860. Proves that Brigham Young and the Apostle Orson Pratt fought over the Adam-God Doctrine.

Great Salt Lake City

Council of the Twelve in Historian's upper room

April 5, 1860 10 a.m.

Present Elders O. Hyde, O. Pratt, J. Taylor, W. Woodruff, G.A. Smith, C.C. Rich, F.D. Richards.

O. Pratt said I have come here by bro Taylor's request, and if there are any objections I will withdraw.

O. Hyde replied We want you here, we dont want you to withdraw, we have been together so long in Mormonism, that we are spoiled for any thing else, it is too late to talk of casting out, or separating.

J. Taylor speaking of Carthage said I have three shots in my leg, I know how a wounded bird feels. I felt a fluttering and fell in an instant, I have a piece out of my thigh as large as my hand, it left a big scar. about Bro. Pratt, I dont feel like giving him up, for we have gone too far, he feels too stiff now, It would be better for him to give way a little, all our acts and particularly our writings ought to be true, it is an infringement of the rights of the others, we ought to be governed by the Spirit of revelation and truth.

Elder E.T. Benson came in, followed by Erastus Snow. any subject that is debateable, when I am abroad, I try to avoid. I would not introduce a question that could put me in a rough place, I feel to keep as far from a precipice as I can.

O. Hyde as we are now all together, we will open with prayer; then converse awile, then clothe & pray.

F.D. Richards prayed.

O. Hyde said I do not feel competent to take up the points of difficulty in doctrine between Bro. Pratt & bro. Young. when we have the spirit of an office and calling, and are in subjection one to another, in this is safety, and as the Savior says unless you become as a little child, you can not enter into the kingdom of God, our character and tenacity to sustain ourselves, has led higher beings than we are, to rebel against God, Lucifer did not acquicise with the presiding power, there was a split, and we all know the consequence.

To acknowledge that this is the Kingdom of God, and that there is a presiding power, and to admit that he can advance incorrect doctrine, is to lay the ax at the root of the tree Will He suffer His mouthpiece to go into error? No. He would remove him, and place another there. bro. Brigham may err in the price of a horse, or a House and lot, but in the revelations from God, where is the man that has given thus saith the Lord when it was not so? I cannot find one instance David was led by his own lust. but the Lord will not suffer Brigham to introduce incorrect doctrine, and he escape, but He has honored him. Then who are we to condemn another man's servant? if we have the spirit of submission, if we have the Spirit of God, it will not be so. we have seen too much, and felt too much to oppose the ruling power. What Joseph Smith said, was applicable then, if we can not go nearer the truth, then go home, and keep your children where they are, that they may not grow any further. We ought to be wedded to the truth,—to the Priesthood,—and to the authority of God,—The presiding power in Heaven rebukes Angels, and what is the result [?], then if the presiding power cannot rebuke us, who are we? Bro Brigham is responsible for the doctrine taught in this Church, and if he did not watch us, and reprove us when wrong, he would not do his duty, and again if any of the Twelve was abroad, and an Elder was propogating a false doctrine, we dealt with that man, then why should we not be dealt with in the same manner? shall he mourn, and we not respond? It is a duty we owe to ourselves; he is the presiding authority of God on the Earth. then he is legitimate, and every thing opposed to him, is not legitimate. Bro. Pratt said he was discouraged and felt reckless, he ought not to be so! God is a jealous God, and His servants are jealous with a godly jealousy, that

the stream may roll on in purity. I have been chastised and knocked about, but respect the authority of the kingdom, and go ahead.

W. Woodruff the remarks of bro. Hyde are dictated by the spirit of wisdom, and the spirit of the Lord, our position is very responsible, and we could not aspire to any thing greater, having received the Apostleship, we should try to honor it; when bro. Pratt made his confession, it made me rejoice, because I thought it was the first time that he felt to fall into the Channel, I would not do any thing to lose my Apostleship, I would rather lose my hand, or my life, I think bro. Pratt has gone too far in advancing the doctrine of the Godhead, they come in contact with the presidency of the Church. bro. Hyde has been mauled & hammered, but he has yielded, and we have either to say that we are the leaders of the church, or to yield to the leader, it is natural the Lord will reveal His doctrine to his mouthpiece; for the interest of our wives and children, we should submit. I feel to thank the Lord for giving us as good a leader as bro. Brigham. no man had a right to call in question what Joseph did. He was led by the spirit of God. bro. Brigham is careful, cautious, and wise, and is a Father, his feeling is to save the people, every thing is Godlike and is filled with wisdom. I want to see bro. Pratt saved, to be one with the Presidency and his brethren, if bro. Pratt has taught a false doctrine, it is no worse for him, than me, or bro. Hyde, and should retract, when a man takes a stubborn course, all Israel feels it; I desire that he may right that matter up. The moment we launch out into unrevealed doctrine, we are liable to get into error, bro Pratt ought to make the thing right with Pres. Young.

O. Hyde Who is our Heavenly Father. I would as soon it was Father Adam, or any other good and lawful being, I shall see him some time, if I do right. What do I know about Adam, in the Councils of the Great God before he came here, or his privileges, I dont know.

Erastus Snow I have confidence that bro. Pratt is just as anxious, as we are to make the plaster as big as the wound, it can be done and not to violate his conscience, the Majority of the Church feels that some of his writings are open to serious objections: it is common for all writers to revise their writings, and qualify many portions, it is always ennobling to such men, bro. Brigham wants bro Pratt to qualify it, with credit to themselves I have read some sweeping declarations in his writings, and thought some of them were dipping into too deep water. He can qualify those words, so as to wipe them out. if bro Pratt had not set his stakes so strong, he would not have had this now. It is given to the presiding officer to discern all things, and tell a man whether he is on the track or not. when bro. Pratt feels a reluctance to credit bro. Brigham, he takes a course opposed to the truth, if bro. Pratt had continued to rejoice in the revelations given to bro. Brigham, at bro. Hyde's, he would not have been in this situation now, we should resist every temptation, and pray over it, until we overcome.

C.C. Rich it has been a sorrow to me that there has any difficulty arisen between bro. Brigham and bro. Pratt, I feel very anxious on this subject, it is simply for bro. Pratt to remove the objectionable items, the brethren rejoiced at his confession, and it was an increase to his influence, it is not right for a member to have doctrines opposed to his quorum, or the Presidency, he can cure the evil that is wanted to be cured. I would not want to yield the good that I can do, for any light thing, I would be glad to see bro. Pratt make it right.

O. Hyde read a revelation given to Joseph Smith (page 200) "that all things shall be done by common consent," for one member to advocate new doctrine without common consent is beyond our pale or jurisdiction.

Antagonistic. I see no necessity in rejecting Joseph's revelations, or going to war with the living ones, that is the nearest to us, but reject those that were the nearest to them. I do not see any contradiction or opposition between B. Young & J. Smith.

A. Pratt B. Young must have feelings towards me, I wish the brethren would point out to me where my pamphlet on "the Holy Spirit" is wrong. J. Taylor when Bro. Brigham tells me a thing, I receive it as revelation, some things may be apparently contradictory, but are not really contradictory.

A. Pratt it was the Father of Jesus Christ that was talking to Adam in the garden. B. Young says that Adam was the Father of Jesus Christ, both of his Spirit and Body in his teachings from the stand. Bro. Richards published in the Seer of Great Truth, that another person would come in the meridian of time, which was Jesus Christ.

A. Hyde David in spirit called Jesus Christ, Lord, how thou art his son! it would seem to be a contradiction, I went to Joseph and told him my ideas of the Omnipresence of the Spirit, he said it was very pretty, and it was got up very nice, and is a beautiful doctrine, but it only lacks one thing, I inquired what is it Bro. Joseph, he replied it is not true. J. Taylor spoke again "if Christ is the first fruits of them that slept" there must be some discrepancy, he must have retained his position, having a legitimate claim to a possession some where else, he ought not to be debased from his rights, The power of God was sufficient to resurrect Jesus immediately, and also the body of Adam.

(he then spoke in the density of air and water) I don't profess to speak philosophically. A. Hyde We have come here to arrange that discourse, to the sanction of Bro. Young, that it may go forth under the sanction of Bro. Pratt. is he willing to put that discourse in a shape to recall or quash certain points of doctrine, not extend, but in an easy way to show reflection, and that truth has led him to make this confession, and to leave Bro. Young out as a dictator, and what would be satisfactory to Bro. Young. I am pleased with the courtesy extended by Bro. Young to Bro. Pratt, it is more than has been extended to me, or others.

A. Pratt I have heard Brother Brigham say that Adam is the Father of our spirits, and he came here with his resurrected body to fight for his own salvation, and I said to him, it leads to an endless number of spirits, which leads to sorrow and death that is troubling to my feelings, even if it were not sustained by revelation.

L. Smith So Bro. says revelation saying that the body of Adam should return to the dust of this earth?

A photograph of the original manuscript of the meeting of the Council of the Twelve, April 5, 1860. Notice that Apostle Pratt claimed that "B. Young says that Adam was the Father of Jesus Christ, both of his Spirit and Body . . ."

O. Pratt I do not see how I can mend the matter, one way or the other, I think the brethren are laboring under a wrong impression. in all of my writings on doctrine, I have tried to confine myself within revelation, I do not remember one item that I consider new, many of the exceptions that I made last night, are not in writing. On my subject of pre-existence, I have quoted largely from Genesis and the Book of Abraham, I have given it, how Adam was placed here, and quoted it, it was not the subject under consideration, Adam and Even came here and took bodies of flesh and bones, the doctrine was in the Church when I came into it, and I have always rejoiced in it, 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. In regard to the infinite knowledge of God, it was not a new doctrine, but I quoted largely from revelation, there is no doctrine so absurd as to think that God will eternally progress in knowledge, In regard to empty space, I considered it a philosophical idea, and my opinion is the same as when I published it. I have never intended to advance new ideas, but to keep within revelation, It is said the revelations given to Joseph Smith, answered then, 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, there may be apparent contradictions, but to suppose that the meaning would be different, I do not believe. One says Adam was formed out of the Earth, and the Lord put in his spirit; and another that he came with his body, flesh and bones, thus there are two contrary revelations. in the garden it is said, that a voice said to Adam, in the meridian of time, I will send my only begotten son Jesus Christ, then how can that man and Adam both be the Father of Jesus Christ?

For me to publish to the world, that the writings that I have sent to the world, backed up by Joseph's revelations are untrue, would be to say, how do we know that in sixteen years time, all these revelations will be overturned, as Joseph's now are, they are written plain. I was willing all these things should slumber. I made a confession as far as my conscience would allow me, to be justified, I could not state it from knowledge. I supposed it was all right, until I heard bro.

Brigham's declarations from the stand; that threw a damper on my mind, I will leave the event in the hands of my brethren, in relation to the doctrine, it is already corrected by bro. Brigham bro. Hyde advanced the same doctrine to Joseph, and he says that Joseph said it was not correct, (O. Hyde that was so) I really believed in regard to the omnipresence of the Spirit, I did really believe that Bro. Brigham had preached the same doctrine, I have not tried to introduce new doctrines into the Church, bro Young's sermon was published by me as soon as I received it, without comment, and I do not intend it shall come from me, while I believe in Joseph Smith's revelations—but I do believe that bro. Brigham errs in judgment.

O. Hyde when there is a want of union, it requires us to speak plain, bro. Pratt does not claim any vision or revelation, but keeps within the scope of Joseph's revelations. The Universalians have their belief, The Presbyterians do the same, they consider they believe they are in the pale of revealed religion, all the Sects do the same, yet how widely they differ. then here comes a man (B.Y.) who says he has a revelation, but it means the sects [?], it is Antagonistic. I see no necessity of rejecting Joseph's revelations, or going to War with the living ones, that is the nearest to us, bro. Pratt is like the Jews, who garnish the sepulchres of the dead, but reject those that were the nearest to them, I do not see any contradiction or opposition between B. Young & J. Smith.

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O. Hyde David in spirit called Jesus Christ, Lord, how then is he his Son? it would seem a contradiction, I went to Joseph and told him my ideas of the Omnipresence of the Spirit, he said it was very pretty, and it was got up very nice, and is a beautiful doctrine, but it only lacks one thing, I enquired what is it bro. Joseph, he replied it is not true.

J. Taylor spoke again "if Christ is the first fruits of them that slept" there must be some discrepancy, he must have resumed his position, having a legitimate claim to a possession some where else, he ought not to be debarred from his rights, the power of God was sufficient to resuscitate Jesus immediately and also the body of Adam.

(he then spoke on the density of air and water) I dont profess to speak philosophically.

O. Hyde We have come here to arrange that discourse, to the sanction of bro. Young, that it may go forth under the sanction of Bro. Pratt is he willing to put that discourse in a shape to recall or qualify certain points of doctrine, not extorted, but in an easy way to shew reflection, and that truth has led him to make this confession, and to leave Bro. Young out as a dictator, and what would be satisfactory to Bro. Young. I am pleased with the leniency extended by bro. Young to bro. Pratt, it is more than has been extended to me, or others.

O. Pratt I have heard brother Brigham say that Adam is the Father of our Spirits, and he came here with his resurrected body, to fall for his own children; and I said to him, it leads to an endless number of falls, which leads to sorrow and death: that is revolting to my feelings, even if it were not sustained by revelation.

E. Snow Is there any revelation saying that the Body of Adam should return to the dust of this Earth?

O. Pratt if you bring Adam as a Spirit, and put him into the tabernacle, runs easy with me; another 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.

O. Hyde Bro. Geo. A. Smith just tell us what will be satisfactory to the Church?

G.A. Smith for him to acknowledge Brigham Young as the President of the Church, in the exercise of his calling, but he only acknowledges him as a poor drivelling fool, he preaches doctrine opposed to Joseph, and all other revelations.

If Brigham Young is the President of the Church, he is an inspired man. If we have not an inspired man, then Orson Pratt is right.

O. Hyde The world does not know that bro. Pratt acknowledges bro. Young as an inspired man.

G.A. Smith The only thing is for bro. Pratt to get a revelation that bro. B. Young is a Prophet of God.

E. Snow I dont think that any light can come to Bro. Pratt, while he resists it.

O. Pratt I did make a confession with my heart, I am only an individual, I can not possibly yield to say I have published false doctrine, I did say it was only my belief, and not revelation, I thought I could go on with the Twelve, and preach and exhort, I leave it entirely in the hands of the Church, I am willing to take out the article, but not willing to say I have taught false doctrine.

I have been in the Church many years, and have learned that so long as we want to keep things smooth, we can do so, any modification you feel to make in that sermon, will be right, even to cutting it down one half.

O. Hyde I feel you will yet acknowledge that you have taught false doctrine. I dont think you will receive a revelation, only thro brother Brigham, and you will yet confess that you have stubbornly resisted the Council, I tell you, you will not get a revelation from God on the subject.

W. Woodruff Paul saw things in the third heaven that he could not reveal to the world, our endowments can not be revealed to the world, Joseph Smith & B. Young are inspired men but can not reveal them, as our leaders are inspired to talk, they are inspired oracles, and we should be as limber as a dish cloth, I have wondered why the Lord could not have cooked up something easier than to see the human family going to hell, or to send his Son to be crucified, I would follow the leader and do the best I could.

O. Hyde we will dress and pray, then have that sermon, and read over item by item, and see what will agree with bro. Pratts conscience.

J. Taylor I dont like any patching, but follow the dictates of our Presidency, I dont believe in having things thrown on bro. Brigham, if that mouthpiece has not power to dictate, I would throw all Mormonism away, all that can be asked is to carry out the doctrine in his sermon.

O. Pratt I have always felt if I can be convinced, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to make the confession.

W. Woodruff brought in the Mss sermon
Elders Hyde, Woodruff, Taylor, Rich, Richards and Snow clothed themselves

Elder Benson then came in and clothed.

Prayer by C.C. Rich

Mouth in the Circle, E.T. Benson *

Tho Bullock then read the discourse of Orson Pratt on Jan. 20, 1860 from the Deseret News, and Mss. and made the alterations when suggested, & when it was finished

J. Taylor moved that the quorum of the Twelve, accept that confession, Secd, Carried.

O. Pratt Brethren I must say I am very thankful for the many items that are struck out, if this will suit the Presidency, I pray that from henceforth, I may be one with you, and preach with you.

Adjourned to 8 pm (at 5½ pm)

Benediction by El. O. Hyde

* Our Father and our God, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the Holy Priesthood we come before thee, having offered up the holy and sacred signs of the Holy Priesthood, to ask thee for such things as we need, and to pardon and forgive all of our sins. and to send thy Holy Spirit to come and

enlighten our minds that they may be clear on the subjects to come before us. we now feel our weakness and pray thee to remove the cloud of darkness, let the destroyer have no power over us, may the council of thy servants be clear and comprehensive, and we pray thee to pour out thy spirit upon us as a Quorum to discharge our duties, help us by the light of thy glorious countenance, to rest upon thy servant Orson Pratt, and we pray thee that double of thy spirit may rest upon him. let his mind be clear, and divest him of selfishness and hardness of heart, and may he be filled with the Holy Ghost that he may subject himself to his brethren, comfort his heart, & rend the vail of unbelief. cause the scales of blindness to fall from his eyes, that he may see, and his ears to hear the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. soften his heart as a little child, to the will of his brethren, and reconcile himself to the will of our God, help him, raise him up, to magnify his apostleship, that he may do good among his brethren, we dedicate him unto thee, and we pray thee that his way may be opened up, and may he be blessed with great faith and power of God, and be a blessing to his family, that he may be relieved in temporal things necessary to make him comfortable, and acknowledge the hand of God in all things, may he rise up and rebuke the destroyer, and be removed from oppression and darkness of mind, We ask the Father in the name of Jesus Christ to remove the darkness in our midst, that the spirit of revelation may be open to us. accept of us, our prayers, our dedication, as thy children, servants and Apostles, We ask thee to bless bro. Hyde as President of this quorum, may he have wisdom to preside as a man of God, filled with the Holy Ghost, that he may have eyes to see and understand thy spirit and be guided aright in all things. bless us as a quorum, may our faith increase, and the power of God be manifested from time to time, we pray thee to bless bro. George A., who has been a long time afflicted, do thou strengthen him up and his ancle healed by the power of God. and may he be healed of all of his infirmities, We pray thee in behalf of brother Brigham Young, who we acknowledge as our leader; Prophet, Seer, and Revelator. do thou speak unto him by visions and dreams, and let him be clothed in revelations continually, and stand as a Prophet over thy people, and do thou keep and preserve him for ever. And do thou also bless thy servants Heber and Daniel, may they stand by him in prosperity and adversity; bless them with health, heal them of their infirmities, may they live long even as long as life is sweet, comfort and bless them, and may they be a blessing to thy Saints scattered abroad in these vallies. bless the officers in thy Church and Kingdom, who are placed to preside over and to counsel thy people. bless their fields, flocks, herds, cattle and soil. bless them in sowing seed in the Earth, that it may bring forth to sustain man and beast, that they may be made glad. bless thy Saints scattered abroad, gather Israel; even thy scattered people who are crying for deliverance. bless thy Saints who are preaching the gospel, enable them to do good, magnify their calling, do a good work and return in peace and safety bless bro. Hooper, may the power of God be on him, [three words illegible] magnify his calling, fill his office as Delegate to Washington for thy people and accomplish all that is necessary, give him power over the members of Congress, the President and the Cabinet. do thou soften the nations of the Earth to bring all things about, even those things that are not fulfilled We dedicate ourselves unto thee, with our Wives and Children, flocks and herds, fields and grain. do thou temper the elements for our good that we may be prospered in all things and do good to thy people. make thy people happy and glorious and cause thy holy spirit to shine forth in our hearts continually. even so.

Amen.

April 5, 1860
Minutes of Council of the Twelve
in upper room of Historian's Office
by Tho. Bullock, clerk.

Part 4

A reproduction of Chapter 10 from the book *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*
By Jerald and Sandra Tanner.

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 Pratt** 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 Pratt 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 Richards’ 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 attendd 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 oraced 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 plannet, or that received, tabernacles on this plannet, . . . 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

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 and Doctrine and Covenants that all men, even the amo 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 Saviors 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 uns Scriptural:

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)



He had received the Priesthood and the
 keys thereof 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 to come to this earth, and
 even our common Mother who is the mother
 of all living brethren spirits in the celestial
 world, and when this earth was organized by
 Elohim: Jehonah & Michael who is Adam our
 common Father, Adam & Eve had the privilege
 to continue the work of propagation, consequently
 came to this earth and commenced the great
 work of forming tabernacles for these spirits &
 dwellers, and when Adam and those that
 assisted him had completed this Kingdom
 on earth he came to it, and slept and forgot
 all and became like an infant child. It
 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 inter-
 preted that the man Adam like all other men
 had the seed within him to propagate his
 species; but not the woman, she conceived
 the seed but she does not produce it, conse-
 quently she was taken from the side of Adam
 of her father, this explains the mystery of Moses
 & all things 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

the earth while in the garden and cultivating
 the ground their bodies became changed from
 immortal to mortal beings with the blood coursing
 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 be fathers
 that man might be, the woman was formed
 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 fruit of
 the flock, thus as a showing that Jesus would
 come and shed his blood.

Father Adam's oldest son (Jesus the savior)
 who is the heir of the family is Father Adam's
 first begotten in the spirit world, who accord-
 ing 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
 for when Adam and Eve got through
 with their work on the 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.