

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

THE ADAM-GOD DOCTRINE

DAVID JOHN BUERGER

. . . when brother Pratt went back last fall, and published the Revelation concerning the plurality of wives; it was thought there was no other cat to let out. But allow me to tell you . . . you may expect an eternity of cats, that have not yet escaped from the bag

Brigham Young, 1853

ON APRIL 9, 1852, Brigham Young rose once again to address a session of general conference. He intended to preach several discourses, he said, and as the *Deseret News* observed the following week, “the Holy Ghost [rested] upon [him] in great power, while he revealed some of the precious things of the kingdom.”¹ One of his subjects was the “mysteries of the kingdom.” If mysteries were to be taught, Young advised, they should be discussed here, for this “is the place for you to teach great mysteries to your brethren, because here are those who can correct you.” After brief comments on amusements and tithing, Young proceeded to a dramatic announcement:

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 Archangel, 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 Christians and non-professing must hear it, and will know it sooner or later.

Jesus Christ, he emphasized, was not begotten by the Holy Ghost; and “who is the Father?”

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He is the first of the human family; and when he took a tabernacle, it was begotten by his father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve; from the fruits of the earth, the first earthly tabernacles were originated by the Father, and so on in succession.

Brigham hinted that he was only telling part of the story: "I could tell you much more about this; but were I to tell you the whole truth, blasphemy would be nothing to it . . ." He then summarized his thoughts:

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.²

Whatever ambiguity twentieth-century commentators have found in this startling discourse, its significance and meaning were not missed by those who heard Brigham speak. Samuel H. Rogers, who thought this "the best Conference that I ever attended," wrote in his journal,

President Brigham Young said that our spirits were begotten before that Adam came to the Earth, and that Adam helped to make the Earth, that he had a Celestial body when he came to the Earth, and that he brought his wife or one of his wives with him, and that Eave was also a Celestial being, that they eat of the fruit of the ground untill they begat children from the Earth, he said that Adam was the only God that we would have, and that Christ was not begotten of the Holy Ghost, but of the Father Adam . . .³

Hosea Stout, also in attendance, wrote that "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 body &c more hereafter" [*sic*].⁴ Although George D. Watt was the official scribe reporting Young's discourse, Wilford Woodruff also made detailed notes of Brigham's remarks:

. . . When our Father came into the garden He came with his celestial body & brought one of his wives with him & eat of the fruit of the garden until He could beget a Tabernacle And Adam is Michael or God and all the God that we have anything to do with . . .⁵

While Young's remarks were not to be published for over two years, he did return to this theme just four months later, in a sermon on August 28. This time Adam was placed in a somewhat larger context. "After men have . . . become Gods," he said, "they have the power then of propagating their species in spirit . . . and then commence the organization of tabernacles. . .

How can they do it? Have they to go to that earth? Yes, an Adam will have to go there, and he cannot do without Eve; he must have Eve to commence the work of generation, and they will go into the garden,

and continue to eat and drink of the fruits of the corporal world, until this grosser matter is diffused sufficiently through their celestial bodies to enable them, according to the established laws, to produce mortal tabernacles for their spirit children.⁶

Brigham's cosmology thus seemingly held that each "god" was personally responsible for creating spiritual offspring, organizing an earth for their temporal existence, and decelestializing himself to a point where he with an "Eve" could procreate physical bodies for their spirit children. Each creator, or "Adam," would then be esteemed a "Heavenly Father" for the inhabitants of his created world—each being the only God whom these inhabitants would worship. Whatever his special mission, Christ was no different in patriarchal lineage than Cain or Abel—all being the literal spiritual *and* physical offspring of the same individual.

While some of the faithful accepted their prophet's new doctrine, others rejected what they perceived as a departure from previous inspiration on the subject. Recounting a discussion of the subject in his journal a few months later, William Clayton wrote that Orson Spencer "spoke of Adam coming to this earth in the morning of creation with a resurrected body" and "endeavor[ed] to substantiate the position taken by President Young: Viz, that Adam came to this earth with a resurrected body, and became mortal by eating the fruits of the earth, which was earthy." Apostle Orson Pratt, however, took "the literal reading of the scriptures for his guide" and maintained that Adam was created from the dust of the earth. From Clayton's perspective the issue was far from satisfactorily settled:

The subject was finally left in so much difficulty and obscurity as it has been from the beginning . . . Elder Pratt advised the Brethren to pray to God for knowledge of the true principles, and it appears evident that when ever the question is decided, it will have to be by revelation from God.⁷

Clayton provided further evidence of the controversy in a letter the next day to Brigham Young (by which time Clayton providentially had moved to a position of agreement with his president):

There is also another subject which has occupied much of the time, and in which the difference in opinion seems to be wider, and more firmly established than the baby resurrection; and that is in regard to Adam's coming on this earth; whether he came here with a resurrected body and became mortal by eating the fruits of the earth which are earthy, or he was created direct (that is his mortal tabernacle) from the dust of the earth, according to the popular opinion of the world. On this subject brother Pratt and myself, have rather locked horns, he holding to the latter opinion, and I firmly believing the former; but there can be no difficulty between us, as he is my superior and I shall not argue against him; but if it were an equal I should be apt to speak my feelings in full. There are difficulties on both sides, take it which way we will, and he is unwilling to express anything more than *his opinion* on the subject. [Emphasis in original.]⁸

Although we have no record of Brigham's reply to Clayton, President Young did respond to these points in another public discourse the following October 1853. "Supposing that Adam was formed actually out of clay," he reasoned with characteristic pragmatism, "out of the same kind of material from which bricks are formed; that with this matter God made the pattern of man, and breathed into it the breath of life, and left it there, in that state of supposed perfection, he would have been an adobie to this day . . ." Then, turning in a more serious vein to those who opposed his new insights,

Some of you may doubt the truth of what I now say, and argue that the Lord could teach him. This is a mistake. The Lord could not have taught him in any other way than in the way in which He did teach him. 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.⁹

The visibility of President Young's teachings on Adam rose dramatically a month later. Several months before, in June 1853, the First Presidency had approved a plan to publish a *Journal of Discourses* in Liverpool, England, containing "Sermons, Discourses, Lectures, etc" delivered in Salt Lake City. Among those to be included in the first volume was Brigham's April 1852 sermon quoted above. Although this volume was not published until 1854, on November 26, 1853, the Church's official British publication, the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* published a verbatim extract of this important sermon under the title, "Adam, Our Father and God."¹⁰ The following editorial was printed one week later:

Our Father Adam. — The extract from the *Journal of Discourses* may startle some of our readers, but we would wish them to recollect that in this last dispensation God will send forth, by His servants, things new as well as old, until man is perfected in the truth. And we would here take occasion to remark, that it would be well if all our readers would secure a copy of the *Journal of Discourses* as it is issued, and also of every standard work of the Church; and not only secure these works, but attentively read them, and thoroughly study the principles they contain.¹¹

The article, as expected, did startle, perhaps even unsettle, some of the British Saints. Two weeks later another editorial, probably authored by Samuel W. Richards (then President of the British Mission and Editor of the *Star*), was published in the *Star* which further encouraged support for the doctrine:

ADAM, THE FATHER AND GOD OF THE HUMAN FAMILY

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 blas-

phemous to the ignorant, it has no doubt given rise to some serious reflections with the more candid and comprehensive mind. A few reasonable and scriptural ideas upon this subject may be profitable at the present time.

Then Adam is really God! And why not? If there are Lords many and Gods many, as the scriptures inform us, why should not our Father Adam be one of them?¹²

Not all the British Saints were convinced, so yet a third supportive editorial was published the next week, assuring readers that “[f]acts still remain facts, whether kept or revealed.” This time the editor closed with the counsel:

It should be borne in mind that these wonderful mysteries, as they are supposed to be, are only mysteries because of the ignorance of men; and when men and women are troubled in spirit over those things which come to light through the proper channel of intelligence, they only betray their weakness, ignorance, and folly.¹³

Less than two months later, in February 1854, President Young again expounded publicly on Adam-God. The message was the same. “Who did beget [Jesus Christ]?” Young asked,

. . . 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. Has he a mother? He has.

Returning again to “this erroneous doctrine” that Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost, Young recalled addressing the issue the previous Fall “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 H Ghost [sic], and some that it was Eloheim.” Brigham’s rejoinder to the debate had much the same flavor as his “adobie” sermon:

When I spoke upon it in this stand before a conference of Elders, I cautioned them when they laid their hands upon the people for the gift of the H Ghost, according to the instructions of the Savior, to be very careful how they laid hands upon young women for if it begat a child in the days of the virgin Mary it is just as liable to beget children in these last days.¹⁴

At the time Young did not state what relationship he believed “Elohim” bore either to Jesus Christ or to Adam-Michael. There was a hint in early 1852, in a sermon two months before the announcement on Adam-God. During a discussion of the Cain and Abel episode, Young had stated,

. . . After the deed was done, the Lord inquired for Abel, and made Cain own what he had done with him. Now, says the grandfather, I will not destroy the seed of Michael and his wife, and Cain I will not kill . . .¹⁵

This grandfather figure, plausibly the father of Adam in the February 1854 discourse, also was mentioned in a sermon by Young a decade later, again without explicit reference to Elohim:

How has it transpired that theological truth is thus so widely disseminated. It is because God was once known on the earth among his children of mankind, as we know one another. Adam was as conversant with his Father who placed him upon this earth as we are conversant with our earthly parents. The Father frequently came to visit his son Adam, and talked and walked with him; and the children of Adam were more or less acquainted with their Grandfather, and their children were more or less acquainted with their Great-Grandfather¹⁶

These last comments, taken alone, almost reflect an "orthodox" understanding, but viewed in the context of Brigham's many other sermons they rather delineate a belief in a "hierarchy of gods" not unlike that first alluded to by Joseph Smith.¹⁷ Young explicitly separated the identities of Adam and his father—the latter being the god considered in twentieth-century Mormon theology as Elohim, the father of the spirits of mankind.¹⁸ According to Young's teachings, however, this figure was in reality a true "Grandfather in Heaven" to the descendants of Adam—to both their bodies and spirits—with Adam assuming the position of "God the [immediate] Father" to both body and spirit. As ultimately, but privately elucidated by Young, Elohim was in fact *Adam's* grandfather (and *not* the "Grandfather in Heaven" to Adam's *descendants* referred to in the foregoing quotation). Speaking to the School of the Prophets, he explained that "Elohim, Yehova & Michael, were father, Son and grandson. They made this Earth & Michael became Adam."¹⁹ Thus, in Brigham's theology, the Lord or God with whom Adam dealt during his mortality on the earth was apparently the figure he termed Jehovah, the Grandfather in Heaven.²⁰

While President Young's concepts were being preached and clarified in Utah, Mormon missionaries continued to carry his message to British proselytes. Several remarks concerning these activities were recounted at a special three-day missionary conference in London, June 26–28, 1854, in honor of the departing mission president, Samuel W. Richards. In reporting on his district to incoming president (and apostle) Franklin D. Richards, Elder Thomas Caffell noted that "some of the officers have not met in council for three years" because "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 Liverpool upon it.²¹

Elder Joseph Hall, who followed, added,

Relative to the principles recently revealed, we have not the least difficulty. If Adam's being our Father and God cannot be proved by the Bible, it is alright.²²

Later yet another elder, James A. Little, felt the subject worthy of comment in his report, and bore his testimony that "I believe in the principle of obedience; and if I am told that Adam is our Father and our God, I just believe it."²³

Apostle Richards' response to this was unequivocal:

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 has declared it, and that is the word of the Lord.²⁴

The elders were not to worry that the doctrine was not found in the scriptures: "I would like to know where you will find scriptures to prove things by, which have never before been revealed."

As noted, at least one apostle resisted Brigham Young. In September 1854, shortly after returning from a mission in Washington, D.C., Orson Pratt discussed his objections directly with the president and other leading brethren. According to Wilford Woodruff's account,

Brother Pratt . . . 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 anoth[er] world & made this brought Eve with him partook of the fruits of the Earth . . . begat children & they ware Earthly & I had mortal bodies & if we ware Faithful we should become Gods as He was.²⁵

Shortly thereafter Young delivered a talk at the October 1854 general conference which is possibly his most forceful and detailed statement on Adam-God ever given. According to the *Deseret News*, Young's "highly interesting discourse . . . held the vast audience as it were spellbound."²⁶ Wilford Woodruff was especially moved, writing in his journal, "I believe that He preach[ed] the greatest sermon that was ever delivered to the Latter Day Saints since they have been a People."²⁷ Yet despite this, the speech was not published.

The text for the President's discourse,²⁸ delivered to an outdoor congregation of several thousand during the administration of the sacrament, was given as:

. . . This is [life] eternal, ~~life~~ that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jeus Christ whom thou hast sent." [sic] I will now put another text ~~that~~ with this and then after a few remarks, it is one of the sayings of the Apostle Paul. "For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven, or in earth (as there be Gods many and Lords many) but to

to [sic] us there is but one God, the Father, of whome are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." This God is the father [of] our Lord Jesus Christ and the father of our spirits

Young emphasized the concept of the patriarchal hierarchy of gods, stating,

Now if you believe what you have heard me say you will believe [sic] there is Lords many, and Gods many; and you will believe [sic] that unto us, the inhabitants of this earth there is but one God with whome we have to do You and I have only one God to whome we are accountable, so we will let the rest alone, and search after the one we have to do with; let us seek diligently after him, the very being who commenced this creation

He further clarified his concept of Adam as a name-title by observing that

Every world has had an Adam, and an Eve: named so, simply because the first man is always called Adam, and the first woman Eve Every world that has been created, has been created upon the same principle

The President then addressed some thoughts to his attentive audience concerning Adam-God:

But let us turn our attention to the God with which we have to do. I tell you simply, he is our father; the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the father of our spirits. Can that be possible? Yes it is possible, he is the father of all the spirits of the human family

I tell you more, Adam ~~was~~ is the father of our spirits. He live upon an earth; he did abide his creation, and did honor to his calling and preisthood [sic], and obeyed his master or Lord, and probably many of his wives did ~~also~~ (the same) and they lived, and died upon an earth, and [then] were resurrected again to immortality and eternal life . . . I will tell you what I think about it [i.e., the identity of the Savior], ~~and what the revelations say~~ as the say I reckon, and as the Yankys say I guess; but I will tell you what I reckon. I reckon that father Adam was a resurrected being, with his wives and posterity, and in the Celestial kingdom they were crowned with glory and immortality and eternal lives, with throws principalities and powers: and it was said to him it is your right to organise the elements; and to your creations and posterity there shall be no end Adam then was a resurrected being; and I reckon,

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?" Brigham queried. "I reckon it"

I reckon that Father Adam, and mother Eve had the children of the human family prepared to come here and take bodies; and when they come to take bodies, they enter into the bodies prepared for them; and

that body gets an exaltation with the spirit, when they are prepared to be crowned in fathers kingdom.

What, into Adams kingdom?

Yes

I tell you, when you see your father ~~Adam~~ in the heavens, you will see Adam; When you see your Mother that bear your spirit, you will see mother Eve

I commenced with father Adam in his resurrected state, noticed our spiritual state, then our temporal or mortal state, [and] traveled until I got back to father Adam again

As noted, this sermon had a major impact upon the listeners. Joseph Lee Robinson, for example, recorded in his journal that he

. . . attended 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 brother 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, for I remembered saying to the Brethren at a meeting of High Priests in Nauvoo, while I was speaking to them under the influence of the Spirit, I remarked thus, that our Father Adam had many wives, and that Eve was only one of them, and that she was our mother, and that she was the mother of the inhabitants of this earth, and I believe that also²⁹

Despite his conviction of the doctrine, Robinson recorded "there were some that did not believe these sayings of the Prophet Brigham, even our Beloved Brother Orson Pratt told me he did not believe it. He said he could prove by the scriptures it was not correct." For Robinson there was no question who held the erroneous position: "I felt very sorry to hear Professor Orson Pratt say that. I feared least he should apostitize, but I prayed for him that he might endure unto the end, for I knew verily it was possible that great men might fall."

The following March 1855, President Young delivered another talk affirming that Adam had come to the earth as a resurrected being,³⁰ and the same month the *Millennial Star* carried more favorable comments on Young's Adam-God doctrine.³¹ A month later, Brigham addressed a meeting of the Deseret Theological Institute. His subject was the identity of God and Jesus Christ, and his remarks were to serve as the "foundation of all theology." "[T]his is for you to believe or disbelieve as you please," Young told the Institute audience, "for if I were to say who he was I have no doubt but that there would be many that would say perhaps it is so and perhaps it is not" He spent a few minutes speaking on Adam, then asked, "Well now who is the father of our Spirits?" Unless Brigham's ordinarily precise clerk, Thomas Bullock, made an error in recording this speech, Young's answer to this question must have been confusing to those in attendance. At least one thing is clear, however: a new circumspection (if not circumlocution) in his comments on this sensitive subject:

I do not design to go into any mysteries or to take up worldly sciences to any great extent, but suppose I were to take up a few of them, I should be like the rest of you: tell what I know according to what I understand and believe. And then if I am wrong I should be glad if God or some man upon the earth would correct me and set me right and tell me what it is and how it is . . .

"If I were to set before you the principle directly to the truth and yet precisely understand pertaining to him with whom we have to do," Brigham continued, "I have no question or doubt but what it would be opposed to your traditions and the feelings of many of you." After seemingly identifying the Father as Adam, he continued,

I tell you this as my belief about that personage who is called the ancient of days, the prince and so on. But I do not tell it because that I wish it to be established in the minds of others, though to me it is as clear as the sun. It is as plain as my alphabet. I understand it as I do the path to go home. I did not understand so until my mind became enlightened with the spirit and by the revelations of God, neither will you understand until our father in heaven reveals all these things unto you. To my mind and to my feelings those matters are all plain and easy to understand.³²

It appears that Brigham intended to give his audience some latitude on these questions. Yet, while characterizing his own view as a "belief," Young also stated that the clarity with which he comprehended this belief came only when his "mind became enlightened with the spirit and by the revelation of God."

In February 1857, President Young again mentioned Adam-God in a public sermon, and as at the Deseret Theological Institute, the tenor of his remarks was somewhat circumspect:

. . . He [God] is a being of the same species as ourselves; He lives as we do, except the difference that we are earthly, and He is heavenly. He has been earthly, and is of precisely the same species of being that we are. Whether Adam is the personage that we should consider our heavenly Father, or not is considerable of a mystery to a good many. I do not care for one moment how that is; it is no matter whether we are to consider Him our God, or whether His Father, or His Grandfather, for in either case we are of one species—of one family—and Jesus Christ is also of our species.³³

Restraint was again in evidence in October of the same year when President Young once more spoke publicly on his doctrine. First, however, there was a mildly sarcastic reproach to his dissenters:

. . . 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. Where was Michael in the creation of this earth? Did he have a mission to the earth? He did. Where was he? In the Grand Council, and performed the mission assigned him there. Now, if it should happen that

we have to pay tribute to Father Adam, what a humiliating circumstance it would be! Just wait till you pass Joseph Smith; and after Joseph lets you pass him, you will find Peter; and after you pass the Apostles and many of the Prophets, you will find Abraham, and he will say, "I have the keys, and except you do thus and so, you cannot pass;" 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. If we can pass Joseph and have him say, "Here; you have been faithful, good boys; I hold the keys of this dispensation; I will let you pass;" then we shall be very glad to see the white locks of Father Adam.³⁴

Having made the point, Young closed more cautiously, "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 hast sent.' "

In retrospect 1856–1857 was a pivotal time in Brigham's public stance on the Adam-God doctrine. It is apparent that this innovative doctrine was still quite controversial four or five years after its public announcement, even among many of the faithful. Thereafter, while in no way discarding this idea, Young advanced his doctrine distinctly less emphatically and less frequently than during the previous four years. A very circumspect tone, for example, is quite evident two years later when, after stating once again that "Mankind are here because they are the offspring of parents who were first brought here from another planet, and power was given to them to propagate their species, and they were commanded to multiply and replenish the earth . . .," Young concluded with a careful double negative: "Adam and Eve are the parents of all pertaining to the flesh and I would not say that they are not also the parents of our spirits."³⁵

Finally, in January 1860, the Twelve were specifically advised by President Young to avoid discussing the subject publicly. "Michael," Wilford Woodruff records Young as saying, "was a resurrected Being and he lef [*sic*] Eloheam and Came to this Earth & with an imtal [*sic*] Body & continued so till he partook of earthly food and begot Children who were mortal (keep this to yourselves) then they died A Carrington spoke upon the subject a short time & made some useful remarks."³⁶

Limiting the subject to private leadership circles did not end all controversy. A few weeks later, April 4, the persistent Orson Pratt presented grievances against Young before the Twelve: "I would like to ennumerate [those] items. first preached and publish[ed] that Adam is the fa[ther] of our spirits, & father of Spirit & father of our bodies. When I read the Rev given to Joseph I read directly the opposite. Lord spake to Adam, which Man eventually became Adam's[.]" (The "Rev" referred to here was probably Section 29:42 in today's D & C, although similar subject matter referred to by Pratt is also found in Moses 4:28 and 5:4–9.)³⁷ This time Brigham's response contained something new and noteworthy:

You came out tonight & place them as charges, & have as many against me as I have you. One thing I thought I might still have omitted It was Joseph's doctrine that Adam was God when in Luke Johnson's, at O Hyde the power came upon us, or such that alarmed the neighborhood. God comes to earth & eats & partakes of fruit.³⁸

This claim that Joseph Smith taught "that Adam was God" is the first of three known occasions on which Brigham Young attributed the origin of Adam-God to Smith.³⁹ While there is no reliable primary source documentation from Smith's era to support this assertion, much later testimony from other intimates of Joseph Smith such as Helen Mar Kimball (one of Joseph's plural wives) in 1882, and Benjamin F. Johnson in 1903, endorse Brigham's claim.⁴⁰ It is therefore appropriate to consider briefly the merits of this assertion.

Joseph Smith unquestionably viewed "Adam" as an individual whose importance extended well beyond the role of first parent to the human race. Five years after the organization of the Church, the Prophet published a revelation which identified "Michael, or Adam, [as] the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days[.]"⁴¹ Four years later, in a sermon in Nauvoo in 1839, he went much further. As recorded by Willard Richards, Smith announced that "*The Priesthood was . . .*

first given to Adam: he obtained the first Presidency & held the keys of it, from generation to Generation; he obtained it in the creation before the world was formed as in Gen. 1, 26:28,—he had dominion given him over every living Creature. He is Michael, the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures . . . he will call his children together, & hold a council with them to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man. He, (Adam) is the Father of the human family & presides over the Spirits of all men, & all that have had the Keys must stand before him in this great Council . . . The Son of Man stands before him and there is given him glory & dominion. —Adam delivers up his Stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the Keys of the Universe, but retains his standing as head of the human family. [emphasis in original]⁴²

The centrality of Adam's role was reiterated by the Prophet in a major discourse on the priesthood the following year. He spoke of Adam being the "first and father of all, not only by progeny, but he was the first to hold the spiritual blessings, to whom was made known the plan of ordinances for the Salvation of his posterity unto the end, and to whom Christ was first revealed, and through whom Christ has been revealed from heaven and will continue to be revealed from henceforth." This has, in retrospect—and in isolation—the ring of Adam-God to it, but Smith then said,

Adam holds the Keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times, i.e. the dispensation of all the times have been and will be revealed through him from the beginning to Christ and from Christ to the end of all the dispensations that have [been and] are to be revealed . . . This then is the nature of the priesthood, every man holding the presidency of

his dispensation and one man holding the presidency of them all even Adam, and Adam receiving his presidency and authority from Christ, but cannot receive a fulness, untill [sic] Christ shall present the kingdom to the Father which shall be at the end of the last dispensation.⁴³

In both of these 1839 and 1840 sermons, Joseph clearly places Adam in a position subservient to Christ, a relationship seemingly incompatible with the Adam-God doctrine later articulated by Brigham. As Orson Pratt noted, there also were other important inconsistencies between the fully developed Adam-God doctrine and the scriptures revealed by Joseph Smith. A problem with our present D & C 29 and Book of Moses has already been alluded to; all three of these scriptures clearly place the speaker ("I, the Lord God") in authority above Adam. Moreover, Adam is commanded to repent and seek redemption "through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son."

Pratt's discomfort with Brigham's Adam-God doctrine was not limited to Young's insistence that Adam was not created from the dust of this earth. Other Latter-day Saint scriptures such as the Book of Mormon also pose some difficulties. The prophet Amulek, for example, is there reported as saying a resurrected "mortal body . . . can die no more," that in the resurrection, "spirits [are] united with their bodies, never to be divided" (Alma 11:45). As both the Book of Moses (6:12), and the Doctrine and Covenants (107:53) report the death of Adam, there is at least a theoretical problem with the notion that he had been resurrected *prior* to his earthly experience.

Additionally, Section 107, which was the third section in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, said in part,

And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever.⁴⁴

Another early revelation (March 1832), now D & C 78, also appeared in the 1835 edition, and made a very similar point. The "Lord God," the "Holy One of Zion," it reported, "hath appointed Michael your prince and established his feet, and set him upon high, and given him the keys of salvation under the council and direction of the Holy One."⁴⁵ As the "Lord," "Lord God," and "Holy One" in these passages are all understood in Mormon theology to refer to Jesus Christ,⁴⁶ these scriptures are as irreconcilable with Adam being the father of Christ as were Joseph's later sermons quoted above. Indeed, the sermons essentially restate the message of these scriptures.

These later sermons are all the more significant when one recalls that Brigham had asserted that "it was Joseph's doctrine that Adam was God when in Luke Johnson's." Johnson was ordained one of the original Apostles in mid-February 1835; briefly (six days) disfellowshipped and removed from the Council of the Twelve in September 1837; went again into apostasy in December 1837; and was excommunicated in April 1838. Although he was re-bap-

tized into the Church well after Smith's death (in 1846), it follows from his church career that any preaching on Adam-God by Smith "in Luke Johnson's" would have to have occurred in Kirtland well before the Nauvoo sermons.

On the other hand, the Nauvoo period also marked the first major synthesis of the Mormon perception of the nature of God, and all of Smith's later teachings are not necessarily known. The Prophet's sermons and writings in his last years more clearly identified God the Father as an actual being who possessed a physical, but "glorified" corporal body such as our own. Smith's important discourses on April 7, 1844 (the "King Follett Sermon") and June 16, 1844 (on the plurality of gods) crystallized ideas on the eternal evolution of mankind. God himself, the Prophet taught, was once a mortal man who had experienced a similar existence to our own. Indeed, both Joseph and Hyrum Smith preached an eternal patriarchal lineage of gods; as there never was a son without a father, so also the God of this earth has a father, as does his father ad infinitum.⁴⁷

While stopping well short of an "Adam-God doctrine," such ideas clearly were necessary precursors to the notions advanced by Brigham. The one fragment of evidence that Smith may have carried this at least a step further is found in a poem by apostate Mormon William Law, recently of the First Presidency, published in the *Warsaw Message* in February 1844. Entitled "Buckeye's Lamentation for Want of More Wives," this poem satirically spoke of the "greater" glory a man could have in the hereafter if he had plural wives; "Creating worlds so fair; At least a *world* for ever *wife* That you take with you there."⁴⁸ (Emphasis in original.) While this notion does presage yet another aspect of Brigham Young's teachings, it obviously still falls well short of a positive link between the Adam-God doctrine and Joseph Smith.

At least as relevant as the foregoing in evaluating Joseph's possible views, is the total absence in any of his known sermons or writings, or in that of any other Mormon leader before 1852, of anything like the fully developed Adam-God doctrine. Instead, statements such as that found in John Taylor's 1852 publication, *The Government of God*, actually suggest that the antithesis of Adam-God was then held to be true: ". . . when God made man, he made him of the dust of the earth . . .," and "Adam is the father of our bodies, and God is the father of our spirits." Orson Pratt's 1848 discussion of "The Kingdom of God" involved analysis of the nature of God; but nothing could be cited from it which would support Adam-God in any way. Another early Mormon favorite—*A Voice of Warning*—first published in 1837 by Parley P. Pratt, did cover the scriptural account of Adam's creation; yet he too did not deviate from Joseph Smith's expositions cited above.⁴⁹ Additionally, while Orson Pratt may have been alone in speaking out against the doctrine after 1852, it is notable that no other Mormon leader—aside from Young—seemed willing to ascribe it to Smith, even after 1852.⁵⁰ The one other apostle to volunteer a source, Heber C. Kimball, seems to ascribe it to himself. In April 1862, Kimball—long an advocate of the doctrine—testified, "[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." Orson Pratt, as noted below, also inferred that the

doctrine originated with Kimball, and T. B. H. Stenhouse, after leaving the Church, made this claim as well, in *Rocky Mountain Saints* (1873).⁵¹

The fact that Brigham Young claimed at least three times that Smith was the originator of Adam-God nonetheless strongly suggests that Brigham thought Smith taught something related to this doctrine. As illustrated above, this indeed is the case. Possibly Young misconstrued or misremembered what he heard (or heard something no one else did?). Whatever the explanation, it can safely be said that with our current understanding it is a very big step from what is known of Joseph Smith's teachings on Adam to those later articulated by Brigham Young.

Orson Pratt's difficulties during these years (to return to our chronology) have been detailed elsewhere.⁵² For present purposes it is important only that Brigham's Adam-God doctrine was one of several major points of disagreement. The day following the April 4 exchange noted above, Orson continued to voice his objections in a meeting with his fellow apostles. Orson Hyde had just remarked that "Brother Brigham may err in the price of a horse . . . 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." Pratt responded,

In regard to Adam being our Father and God . . . I frankly say, I have no confidence in it, altho advanced by Brother Kimball in the stand, and afterwards approved by Brigham . . . I have heard Brigham say that Adam is the Father of our spirits and he came here with a 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 sustained by revelation.

One [revelation] says that 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, there are two contradictory 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? . . . It was the Father of Jesus Christ that was talking to Adam in the garden. Young says that Adam was the Father of Jesus Christ both of his spirit and body in his teaching from the stand.⁵³

Brigham responded indirectly in a sermon several weeks later, acknowledging only that,

. . . if guilt before my God and my brethren rests upon me in the least, it is in this one thing, that I have revealed too much concerning God and his kingdom, and the designs of our Father in heaven. If my skirts are stained in the least with wrong, it is because I have been too free in telling what God is, how he lives, the nature of his providences and designs in creating the world, in bringing forth the human family on the earth, his designs concerning them, etc. If I had, like Paul, said—"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant," perhaps it would have been better for the people.⁵⁴

These comments suggest the continued reluctance to accept Brigham's doctrine, an attitude which no doubt was responsible for the following outburst in a Young sermon later that year:

I will give you a few words of doctrine, upon which there has been much inquiry, and with regard to which considerable ignorance exists. Br. Watt will write it, but it is not my intention to have it published, therefore pay good attention, and store it up in your memories. Some years ago, I advanced a doctrine with regard to Adam being our father and God, that will be a cause [curse?] to many Elders of Israel because of their folly. With regard to it they yet grovel in darkness and will. It is one of the most glorious revealments of the economy of heaven, yet the world holds it [in] dirrision [*sic*]. Had I revealed the doctrine of baptism from the dead instead [of] Joseph Smith there are men around me who would have ridiculed the idea until dooms day. But they are ignorant and stupid like the dumb ass.⁵⁵

Despite this—perhaps because of it—Brigham appears to have followed his own counsel, and largely abandoned public efforts in support of the Adam-God doctrine after 1861.⁵⁶ Indeed, two years later Brigham addressed a group of California emigrants enroute through Salt Lake City on Mormon beliefs, and gave no hint of his unique theology on this subject:

. . . We believe in God the Father and in Jesus Christ our elder brother. We believe that God is a person of tabernacle, possessing in an infinitely higher degree all the perfections and qualifications of his mortal children. We believe that he made Adam after his own image and likeness. . . .⁵⁷

This statement has become popular with those who wish to deny that Young espoused the Adam-God doctrine, with which it cannot easily be reconciled. While one might reasonably dismiss this particular statement as designed specifically for his non-Mormon audience, there are other similarly difficult statements from Young. Just a few months after the emigrant speech, for example, he told his faithful audience in the Ogden Tabernacle that

. . . the Lord is our God and it is He whom we serve; and we say to the whole world that He is a tangible Being . . . and if He created Adam and Eve in His own image, the whole human family are like Him. This same truth is borne out by the Savior. . . .

. . . He sent his Angels, and at last sent His Son, who was in the express image of the Father—His Only Begotten Son, according to the flesh here on this earth. This is the God we serve and believe in.⁵⁸

Thus, Brigham seems to identify the same Supreme Being as the father both of Adam and Jesus Christ.

Seven years later, this time in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, he made the same point quite explicitly: "We are all the children of Adam and Eve, and they and we are the offspring of Him who dwells in the heavens . . ." ⁵⁹ These public statements raise several obvious questions, satisfactory answers to

which are not yet known. Was the wording carefully selected to allow an inapparent alternative understanding to the plain meaning of Brigham's remarks, or did he mean to assert as truth what these statements taken at face value would imply? Given the extensive testimony in support of Adam-God before, during and after the period of these contrary remarks, there seems little question as to Young's true beliefs. Nonetheless this is an area deserving further study.

As indicated, Brigham did continue to espouse the Adam-God doctrine after this time, but usually only within much more restricted circles. For example, according to Wilford Woodruff's account, Brigham discussed the subject in a meeting of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets in 1867, and stated that "Adam was Michael the Ark angel & he was the Father of Jesus Christ & was our God & that Joseph taught thoght [*sic*] this Principle."⁶⁰ That there were many among this more select group who were favorably disposed to—or at least accepting of—Young's views is evident from the minutes of a School of the Prophets meeting in Provo the following year. Abraham O. Smoot, according to this record, spoke of "[t]he doctrine preached by Pres. 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—some believe it because the Pres. says so—others because they can find testimony in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants." After referring to Orson Pratt's rejection of the belief, Smoot said, "this is not the way to act—we are not accountable on points of doctrine if the President makes a statement it is not our perogative to dispute it—he is only accountable in points of doctrine, I have heard President avow the truth of Adam being our Father and God but have never heard him argue the question at all." Such acceptance of Brigham's beliefs is further evidenced by A. F. MacDonald's remarks to the School:

I thought I would speak briefly in relation to Adam being our God. Since the year 1852 when the President first spoke on this subject, I have frequently endeavored to reconcile what I have read with regard to this matter. I believe what the President 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. Who his God and Father may be, I have no knowledge. President Kimball spoke on this question recently and very plainly illustrated the character and relationship of our Father and God.

Elder George G. Bywater also felt it unwise to question Young's doctrine:

I am not disposed to question the discrepancies on this question of doctrine: if we live faithful, all will become clear to us. We cannot become united only as we get united in understanding; 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—and what we do not see is only evidence that we have not the light necessary.⁶¹

Private endorsement of Young's teachings was even more emphatic in other meetings of the School of the Prophets. 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."⁶² 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."⁶³

The public de-emphasis on the Adam-God doctrine apparent in the 1860s continued through Brigham's death in 1877. In an 1870 meeting of the School of the Prophets, "Prest. Young" again had advised "the brethren to meditate on the subject, pray about it and keep it to yourselves."⁶⁴ Three years later, amidst the testimonials of the 1873 meeting noted above, he further counseled that he "was positive of the truth of this doctrine [Adam being our Father and our God], but thought we should be cautious about preaching on doctrines unless we fully understand them by the power of the Spirit, then they commend themselves to the hearts of the hearers."⁶⁵

Perhaps significantly, it was on the relatively rare occasions when President Young addressed this persistently unpopular subject during these years that he began to ascribe regularly the doctrine to Joseph Smith. Such claims made in 1861 and 1867 already have been noted; another was made in 1876. In 1873, however—a year in which T. B. H. Stenhouse wrote that "the mass of the Mormon people do not believe the doctrine of the Adam deity"⁶⁶—Brigham, for the only known time, carried his public case one step further. In a sermon in the New Tabernacle in June, which *was* published in the *Deseret News*, the prophet commented:

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—I do not know, I do not inquire, I care nothing about it.

This, then, was *not* a personal belief. Nor was there any question about what was being said. After indicating that "Father Adam" held the keys of salvation for his children, Brigham went on: "I could not find any man on the earth who could tell me this, although it is one of the simplest things in the world, until I met and talked with Joseph Smith" "We say," he then continued,

. . . that Father Adam came here and helped to make the earth. Who is he? He is Michael, a great prince, and it was said to him by Eloheim,

"Go ye and make an earth." . . . Adam came here and got it up in a shape that would suit him to commence business . . . Father Adam came here, and then they brought his wife. "Well," says one, "Why was Adam called Adam?" He was the first man on the earth, and 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"⁶⁷

The following day Brigham elaborated somewhat on revelation at a meeting of the School of the Prophets. "Said there were many revelations given to him that he did not receive from the Prophet Joseph. He did not receive them through the Urim and Thummim as Joseph did but when he did receive them he knew of their truth as much as it was possible for him to do of any truth." It was also in this meeting that Daniel Wells called for, and received the ringing endorsements of Brigham's teachings quoted above. Given this context there can be no question about what was understood to be under discussion by those in attendance.⁶⁸

The concluding chapter in the Brigham Young phase of this story is in some ways as predictable as it is surprising. Driven in his last years to reform and standardize a number of administrative and other facets of the Kingdom, the President decided among other things that the temple endowment ceremony should be standardized in a written format. On February 7, 1877, just six months before his death, Brigham held a meeting in his home in St. George, and recounted some of the initial problems encountered when Joseph Smith first introduced the endowment in the upper room of his store in Nauvoo. Joseph reportedly charged Young with "setting the ordinances right." Now, over thirty years later, since everything was to be written down by scribes L. John Nuttall and J. D. T. McAllister, Brigham had prepared a text for a "lecture at the veil to be observed in the Temple"—a summarization of the major aspects of the endowment. Thus, whatever its public fate, Brigham's inspiration would be preserved in one of the most exalted and restrictive of Mormon ordinances.⁶⁹ According to Nuttall, the lecture informed initiates that:

Adam was an immortal being when he came. on this earth he had lived on an earth similiar [*sic*] to ours he had received his 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 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. and when this earth was organized by Elohim. Jehovah & Michael who is Adam our common Father.

In discussing the earthly phase of Adam's existence, the lecture revealed that,

Adam & Eve had the privilege to continue the work of Progression. consequently came to this earth and commenced the great work of forming tabernacles for those spirits to dwell in. and when Adam and those that assisted him had completed this Kingdom our earth he came toil. and slept and forgot all and became like an infant child Adam & Eve when they were placed on this earth were immortal beings with flesh. bones and sinues [sic]

With respect to the parentage of Jesus Christ,

Father Adam's oldest son (Jesus the Saviour) 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 in the spirit World. who according to the flesh is the only begotten as it is written. (In his divinity he haveing [sic] 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 in this earth. they did not lay their bodies down in the dust, but returned to the spirit World from whence they came.⁷⁰

Contrary to many later perceptions, Brigham Young's death in late August 1877 did not mark the end of the Adam-God doctrine. While available diaries from this period are relatively silent on the subject, and while there is a virtually complete public silence,⁷¹ many of the Church's leading authorities unquestionably retained a belief in Brigham's teachings (others apparently did not). In 1880, for example, Edward Stevenson of the First Council of Seventy "by request of one of the Presidency . . . [spoke] upon God as the father of our spirrits [sic]" at a Davis Stake conference. His message was clear: ". . . therefore Adam is the Father of my *Spirrit* & also of my body . . ." ⁷² Two years later Stevenson and several others dealt with Thomas Howell, who opposed the Adam-God doctrine, in a general meeting of the Seventies. Howell was advised that if he "could not comprehend these things to lay them up untill he could, & if he indulged in that spirrit to correct or set President Young rite that he would be delt with & lose his faith & standing in the Church." After "meny remarks" Howell "said he was rong, sory for it & asked for forgiveness."⁷³

Abraham H. Cannon recorded an incident during 1888 in which his father, Apostle George Q. Cannon, endorsed some of the doctrine which earlier had been taught by Young:

He [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". [sic] "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 the dust, was made, as President Young said, of the dust of another planet than this." I was very much instructed by the conversation and this day's service.⁷⁴

A few months later, Joseph E. Taylor (First Counselor in the Salt Lake Stake Presidency) delivered a speech in the Logan temple in which he claimed that Adam was a resurrected man and that Adam was the father of Jesus Christ,⁷⁵ based in part on Brigham's April 1852 sermon. This does not appear to have been the Lecture at the Veil prepared by Brigham in his last year. It is not clear, in fact, what did become of the lecture. The apparent ignorance of the subject matter implied by Abraham Cannon's account—despite his having been a General Authority for six years—suggest it was not routinely presented in the temple. Similar ignorance among some missionaries and their president—*noted below*—who also presumably had been through the temple prior to their missions supports this conclusion. Although exposés of the temple ceremonies published about this time do not include any reference to this lecture, "fundamentalist" authors have asserted without serious attempt at documentation that Brigham's lecture was an integral part of the temple ceremony until about 1902–1905. In support of this has been placed the testimony of one individual who in 1959 distinctly remembered hearing during his endowment in the temple in 1902 that "Adam was our God." On returning from his mission in 1904 he noted that these teachings had been removed.⁷⁶ While one would expect more extensive evidence than this were it true that the lecture was regularly given for twenty-five years, it is quite possible that something akin to the Joseph E. Taylor remarks is the basis for the recollection. It should also be recalled that other "discredited" notions were still being promulgated in some temples by a few individuals during the early years of the twentieth century—such as the continued legitimacy of plural marriage, also a cherished fundamentalist tradition.

Nonetheless it cannot safely be argued that Young's teachings on Adam were indeed discredited in the private circles of the church hierarchy. 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."⁷⁷

By contrast, others among Brigham's erstwhile supporters did have a change of heart. George Q. Cannon, who for a time had been a counselor to Young in the First Presidency, later reflected,

Some of my brethren, as I have learned since the death of President Brigham Young, did have feelings concerning his course. They did not approve of it, and felt oppressed, and yet they dare not exhibit their feelings to him, he ruled with so strong and stiff a hand, and they felt that it would be of no use. In a few words, the feeling seems to be that he transcended the bounds of the authority which he legitimately held.

I have been greatly surprised to find so much dissatisfaction in such quarters [S]ome even feel that in the promulgation of doctrine he took liberties beyond those to which he was legitimately entitled.⁷⁸

While neither specific individuals or doctrines are mentioned, it is worth noting that we have no record of John Taylor explicitly advocating the Adam-God doctrine even during Young's administration. His *Government of God*, published the year the doctrine was first publicly advanced surely gave no hint of familiarity with these notions; and as Young's successor he published *The Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (1882) which contained no support whatever for Brigham's views, despite many references to Adam, Christ, and the Godhead. While there are no passages in this latter work which directly attack Adam-God, Taylor's approach is very similar to that of Orson Pratt and is implicitly incompatible with facets of Young's teachings. His overall aim—in the words of a recent observer—was clearly to “reChristianize” Mormonism.⁷⁹

Other late nineteenth-century publications by Mormon authorities are also notable for their discretion on (if not rejection of) the subject of Adam-God. Despite his apparent continuing support of Young's teachings, Franklin D. Richards' *Compendium* (1857) contained no hint of this belief. It is noteworthy that while he does cite passages from Brigham's April 9, 1852, sermon to support several characteristics of God and the Holy Ghost, he fails to quote the portions on Adam-God. His 1882 revision of this book, published in conjunction with James A. Little, totally eliminates any references to Young's sermon. Not only does this influential second edition contain no support of Adam-God, but the scriptures cited on man's creation and fall actually are aligned more with Orson Pratt and John Taylor's writings noted above; later editions through the last one in 1925 leave these items intact.⁸⁰

Although one might read Adam-God into the vague prose found in Parley P. Pratt's *Key to the Science of Theology* (1855), support for Young's doctrine is not directly stated. Orson Spencer's celebrated letters to Reverend William Crowel, written in 1847 and widely published for many years thereafter, offer no hint of Adam-God. The same is true for Charles W. Penrose's influential book, “Mormon” *Doctrine, Plain and Simple* (1882) and John Nicholson's *The Preceptor* (1883). In 1888, B. H. Roberts' *The Gospel, an Exposition of its First Principles* identified God the Father and Jesus Christ as having a “proprietaryship to this earth, and . . . are the Supreme Governing Power in it”; but no discussion of Adam's role is given. His 1893 supplement to this book, *Man's Relationship to Deity*, recites the standard scriptural account of Adam's creation; however, Roberts also expresses doubt in the “creation from the dust” story and postulates instead Brigham Young's belief in Adam's procreation on another planet and subsequent transplantation to this earth. Nevertheless, Adam-God is not mentioned.⁸¹

Despite Wilford Woodruff's copious notes on the subject during the Young administration, nothing really conclusive on his later views on Adam-God has been reported. It is notable that one year after Woodruff's death, the

Church published Dr. James E. Talmage's *The Articles of Faith* (1899) which included such quotations as "He [God] revealed himself to our first earthly parents . . . [who] heard His voice in the Garden, and . . . continued to call upon God, and to sacrifice to Him . . ."; and "[T]he Holy Ghost inspired [Adam] and bare record of the Father and the Son" ⁸²

In sum it appears that Brigham's Adam-God doctrine never became thoroughly established in late nineteenth-century LDS theology. While it is evident that many of the leading authorities of the Church endorsed Young's teaching during these years, there was not a unanimous view even among the hierarchy. The published writings of church authorities in these years avoided any endorsement of the doctrine, and evidence suggests that it was not widely accepted among the general membership of the Church. ⁸³

II

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, and to do the best we can and as the Spirit may suggest when it is thrust upon us.

Apostle Franklin D. Richards, 1897

As early as 1860 critics of the Mormons, notably the newly Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, had used Brigham's Adam-God doctrine as a focal point for attack. In the years following Young's death, polygamy was the principal cause célèbre, but with the Manifesto of 1890 "anti-Mormon" attention returned to other heretical doctrinal matters. ⁸⁴ In the face of this development, according to one report, official counsel from the Church was to downplay the Adam-God doctrine. In 1892 George Q. Cannon advised that "[I]t was not necessary that we should [teach] or endorse the doctrine that some men taught that Adam was the Father of Jesus Christ. Counsel was given for the Elders to teach that which they Knew, not that which they did not." ⁸⁵ Three years later President Wilford Woodruff made essentially the same point:

How much longer I shall talk to this people I do not know; but I want to say this to all Israel: Cease troubling yourselves about who God is; who Adam is, who Christ is, who Jehovah is. For heaven's sake, let these things alone. Why trouble yourselves about these things? . . . God is God. Christ is Christ. The Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost. That should be enough for you and me to know. If we want to know any more, wait till we get where God is in person. 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. ⁸⁶

This did not, of course, stop Protestant ministers from using the issue to discredit the Church. In October 1897, for example, Mormon elders began proselyting in Fresno, California. They authored a favorable introductory article on the Church which was published in the Fresno paper. A local

minister, C. A. Munn, proceeded to publish several articles of his own, in part quoting Brigham Young's April 1852 sermon. Although the elders tried to meet Munn's challenge, they failed, and mission president Ephraim H. Nye came to their aid in a rebuttal which stated that Munn had misrepresented Brigham Young's remarks by taking them out of context. Nye claimed that for Mormons, Adam "is not the God to whom we pray, nor did Brigham Young undertake to convey such an idea. We worship the being who placed Adam in the garden of Eden."⁸⁷ Pastor Munn responded that Nye's claim was not true; that the Mormon Church in fact did teach that Adam was God.

Nye appealed for assistance to Apostle Franklin D. Richards. Explaining that "this is a matter that we have got to meet continually," Nye asked Richards to indicate any errors in his reasoning. He candidly admitted that his elders were unable to handle the question, and "have to 'Dodge' it the best they can."⁸⁸ On December 16, 1897, Elder Richards met with the First Presidency and part of the Council of the Twelve and read the *Fresno Morning Republican* article along with President Nye's letter. Richards' diary records that Nye's letter "was read & highly approved but no action as to the dealing with Adam our F. & God subject."⁸⁹ Another apostle in attendance was Brigham Young, Jr., who, along with President Woodruff, had heard his father's remarks made in St. George on February 7, 1877. (The younger Young evidently believed his father's testimony, for he wrote in his journal the day of the Richard's discussion, "Adam is our father and God and no use to discuss it with Josephites or any one else."⁹⁰) The next day Richards drafted a letter to Nye, as recounted in the Apostle's diary: "Sent Prest E. H. Nye letter of Decision of Council about and approving his Article to the *Fresno Republican* & a copy of Prest Youngs remarks about Adam our Father as contained in Vol. 1 of Journal of Discourses." Elder Richards' letter to Nye was itself quite revealing:

On receipt of your letter of the 4th inst., I conferred with Prest. Joseph F. Smith, and we concluded to present the matter to the Council of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles. Both your letters to me, and the Article to the *Fresno Republican*, were read. Each of the Presidency and several of the Apostles expressed themselves well pleased with your article, that it evinced skill and valor for the Truth, and they did not see how it could be much improved. 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, and to do the best we can and as the Spirit may suggest when it is thrust upon us.

Your having got so many of the Josephites was received with marks of particular pleasure. 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 Youngs sayings on that subject, I enclose a copy from his sermon in the first Volume of the Journal of Discourses.⁹¹

While one must be cautious in accepting all of Richards' remarks uncritically, in view of his strong previous commitment to the Adam-God doctrine, his

comments about “more advanced doctrine” suggest that Brigham’s ideas were not altogether abandoned. On the other hand, the impression is also conveyed that the missionaries in the field were not at all familiar with the notion.

President George Q. Cannon’s politic remarks in 1898 reflect well the attitude of the Church at the close of the century:

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.⁹²

The next few years brought the deaths of many key Church authorities who had worked with Brigham Young and supported his doctrine. Wilford Woodruff died in 1898, Franklin D. Richards in 1899, George Q. Cannon and Lorenzo Snow in 1901, and Brigham Young, Jr., in 1903. Only Joseph F. Smith remained of those who had been apostles during Brigham’s lifetime. It is perhaps significant that the major Church commentaries explicitly refuting the Adam-God doctrine—even to the point of denying that it was ever taught—did not come until after the deaths of these men.

III

Speculations as to the career of Adam before he came to the earth are of no real value Dogmatic assertions do not take the place of revelation, and we should be satisfied with that which is accepted as doctrine, and not discuss matters that, after all disputes, are merely matters of theory.

The First Presidency, 1912

The intense scrutiny to which Mormon beliefs were subjected during the first part of Joseph F. Smith’s administration, coupled with the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve’s reluctance to discuss Brigham Young’s Adam-God doctrine, eventually led to a significant reinterpretation of Young’s belief. While this change came about gradually, it ultimately achieved official status with a First Presidency statement issued on the matter in 1912.

The most prominent force in this development was Charles W. Penrose, editor of the *Deseret News*. During the late 1890s and early 1900s Penrose was the leading Mormon defender of the faith in a critical confrontation with the anti-Mormon *Salt Lake Tribune*. In response to frequent accusations that Mormons still professed a belief that Adam was God, Penrose undertook a

rebuttal which began in February 1900 with a personal letter to Quincy Anderson of Ozark, Missouri. In offering his explanation of Brigham Young's April 1852 sermon, Penrose denied that Young meant to say that Mormons worship Adam, or that Adam was the father of Jesus Christ. "As to Adam, he [Young] taught that he was God in the sense of being at the head of the human family . . . and in the Patriarchal order he will be the personage with whom they will have to do, and the only one in that capacity."⁹³

Penrose's letter was published without his permission in the Reorganized Church's *Saints' Herald*. Penrose thereupon reprinted the letter in the *Deseret News* with the following carefully worded explanation:

Anyone who has carefully read the discourse . . . will perceive that our brief statement of its purport is correct, that there is nothing in one that is in conflict with the other that we have neither "apologized for" nor disputed anything contained in that one sermon, which has been so much misunderstood and perverted by the enemies of our later venerable president. We are familiar with the doctrine he taught and which he did not attempt fully to explain in the discourse which has been published. And it should be understood that the views entertained by the great leader and inspired servant of the Lord, were not expressed as principles to be accepted by mankind as essential to salvation. Like the Prophet Joseph Smith, his mind was enlightened as to many things which were beyond a common understanding, and the declaration which would bring upon him the opposition of the ignorant.

Penrose indicated that "[t]here are men in the church who entertain ideas of a more advanced nature, some of which, although they may be expressed in public . . . are not put forth as binding upon any person . . ."

That which President Young put forth in the discourse referred to, is not preached either to the Latter-day Saints or to the world as a part of the creed of the Church. In answering the letter of our correspondent we simply explained in private that which was asked in private, so that he might understand the tenor of President Young's views, and not with any intention of advocating or denying his doctrine, or of controverting anything that may have been said upon the subject by opponents of his utterances.⁹⁴

One implication of these remarks—i.e., that Young's belief *could* have been valid—was not amplified. The heart of Penrose's statement to readers of the *Deseret News* was simply this: regardless of the meaning of Young's dogma, it did not represent binding or official Church doctrine.

In September 1902, Penrose published a lengthier article, entitled "Our Father Adam," in the *Improvement Era*, which in a sense marked the first major effort by the Church to "explain" Brigham's declaration that "Adam was our God and the only God with whom we have to do." The substance of his remarks followed closely what had been suggested in the *Deseret News* two and a half years earlier—principally, that Young was being misinterpreted, and that his comments were better understood when taken in con-

junction with the concept of patriarchal order. Wrote Penrose, "The views then expressed were uttered in a single sermon, which created so much comment that the speaker did not afterward enter into further details or explanation." "Opponents" of Mormonism were "very fond of quoting isolated passages" from Young's 1852 sermon, but ignored the "hundreds of illusions" to that "Supreme Being" which Young made throughout the course of his life. Moreover, Young's theory, he again explained with a certain inconsistency in logic, had never been "formulated or adopted" by the Church.⁹⁵

Although arguments such as these were to become the standard "Church" approach to the issue, some Church leaders were not willing to gloss over Brigham Young's beliefs. In February 1902 Bishop Edward Bunker, Jr., of Bunkerville, Nevada, wrote to Church President Joseph F. Smith explaining that a recently returned missionary had been "advicating the Doctorn [*sic*] that Adam is the very eternal Father in the Godhead and the Father of Jesus Christ and that Pres Kelch so taught the Elders in that mission I say the Doctorn [*sic*] is *Faulse* [*sic*] . . ." ⁹⁶ In response to Bunker's quest for clarification, President Smith appears also to have chosen his words carefully:

It is certainly unwise for the Elders or any other member of the Church to advocate doctrines that are not clearly set forth in the revealed word of God, and concerning which, in consequence, difference of opinion exist While it is far from my purpose to stifle thought and free speech among the brethren, or to brand as "false doctrine" any and every mystery [*sic*] of the kingdom, it is neverthe less [*sic*] my wish and my advice, in which Presidents Winder and Lund, my counselors, heartly join, that the Elders should not make a practise of preaching upon these abstruse themes, these partly revealed principles, respecting which there are such wide differences of belief.

What is called the Adam God doctrine may properly be classed among the mysteries. The full truth concerning it has not been revealed to us; and until it is revealed all wild speculations, sweeping assertions and dogmatic declarations relative thereto, are out of place and improper. We disapprove of them and especially the public expression of such views. . . .

President Smith then identified the accepted Church belief as being that Adam was Michael, the Ancient of Days, and that he held a patriarchal position as "head of the human family." He remarked that "Christ is not Adam, nor is Adam Christ, but both are eternal Gods, and it may even be said Fathers, since they are the parents of eternal or spiritual children." The President concluded by saying, "As to the personality and position of each God, and as to which all is the greater, these are matters immaterial at the present time, and are best but an unprofitable speculation. Let us be content with what is plainly revealed on the subject, namely; that though there be Lords many and Gods many as the Apostle Paul declares, yet to us there is but one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁹⁷

A more forceful endorsement of Brigham Young's innovation apparently occurred when B. H. Roberts, a member of the First Council of Seventy since 1888, participated in a debate with Reverend C. Van Der Donckt in 1902. In a ringing, but ultimately ambiguous tribute, Roberts said:

Some of the sectarian ministers are saying that we "Mormons" are ashamed of the doctrine announced by President Brigham Young to the effect that Adam will thus be the God of this world. No, friends, it is not that we are ashamed of that doctrine. If you see any change come over our countenances, when this doctrine is named, it is surprise, astonishment, that any one at all capable of grasping the largeness and extent of the universe—the grandeur of existence and the possibilities in man for growth, for progress, should be so lean of intellect, should have such a paucity of understanding, as to call it in question at all. That is what our change of countenance means—not shame for the doctrine Brigham Young taught.⁹⁸

The First Presidency, as such, first became publicly involved in the issue in 1909 when they issued a statement on "The Origin of Man," directed principally at evolutionary questions. In this they explained that "Adam our great progenitor, 'The First Man,' was, like Christ, a pre-existent spirit, and like Christ he took upon him an appropriate body, the body of a man, and so became a 'living soul.'"⁹⁹ While this official declaration had not dealt with the Adam-God question, nor specified the method by which Adam "took upon him an appropriate body," it did generate sufficient discussion that President Joseph F. Smith, as the editor of the *Improvement Era*, published the following editorial:

Whether the mortal bodies of men evolved in natural processes to present perfection, through the direction and power of God; whether the first parents of our generation, Adam and Eve, were transplanted from another sphere, with immortal tabernacles, which became corrupted through sin and the partaking of natural foods, in the process of time; whether they were born here in mortality, as other mortals have been, are questions not fully answered in the revealed word of God.¹⁰⁰

Two years later, in March 1912, the First Presidency placed another statement, more explicitly on Adam-God, in the *Improvement Era*. The language reflects an apparent debt to the previous writings of editor Charles W. Penrose, who became an Apostle in 1904 and was now a member of the First Presidency. In part the statement read,

Speculations as to the career of Adam before he came to the earth are of no real value. We learn by revelation that he was Michael, the Archangel, and that he stands at the head of his posterity on earth (Doctrine and Covenants, Sect. 107:53–56). Dogmatic assertions do not take the place of revelation, and we should be satisfied with that which is accepted as doctrine, and not discuss matters that, after all disputes, are merely matters of theory.¹⁰¹

While it was not specified which “dogmatic assertions” were in question, the message was unmistakable.

A few weeks later at a special priesthood meeting held during the Church’s annual conference, President Penrose reportedly read a letter received by the First Presidency which stated that some patriarchs had been teaching the Adam-God doctrine to Church members. Penrose then read from D & C 19 and 107 in refutation of the belief and, according to Thomas Clawson’s journal, argued that “Brigham Young did not qualify his remark which were taken in longhand and there may have been somethings said which unless further explained might be misconstrewed [*sic*] . . .

Prest. Jos F. Smith then said that he was in full accord with what Prest Penrose had said and that Prest. Brigham Young when he delivered that sermon only expressed his own views and that they were not corobirated [*sic*] by the word of the Lord in the Standard works of the Church[.]

After describing how the Church’s scriptures were voted upon and sustained “as Standards of the Church,” President Smith stated: “Now all doctrine if it can’t be established by these standards is not to be taught or promulgated [*sic*] by members.”¹⁰²

Four years later the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve again addressed the issue, in a pamphlet entitled “The Father and the Son.” The purpose of this publication was to clarify title and role definitions of God the Father and Jesus Christ. The Presidency stated, unequivocally, “God the Eternal Father, whom we designate by the exalted name-title ‘Elohim,’ is the literal Parent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and of the spirits of the human race.”¹⁰³ This, notwithstanding some definitional imprecision, seems a clear rejection of at least part of Brigham’s understanding, for Mormons had always distinguished “Elohim” from Adam (i.e., Michael).¹⁰⁴

Despite the seeming finality of this language, questions still persisted. President Penrose, who had continued to speak regularly on the subject, again responded, this time in General Conference, April 6, 1916:

There still remains, I can tell by the letters I have alluded to, [i.e., those sent to the First Presidency] an idea among some of the people that Adam was and is the Almighty and Eternal God [T]he notion has taken hold of some of our brethren that Adam is the being that we should worship I am sorry that has not been rectified long ago, because plain answers have been given to brethren and sisters who write and desire to know about it, and yet it still lingers, and contentions arise in regard to it, and there should be no contentions among Latter-day Saints

Who was the person Adam prayed to? Adam prayed to God So Adam was neither the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, was he? Then who was he? Why, we are told he was Michael in his first estate, and as Adam he will stand at the head of his race.¹⁰⁵

A few years later Penrose was even more explicit as he affirmed that "Jesus of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary, was literally and truly the Son of the Father, the Eternal God, not of Adam."¹⁰⁶

Thus it was Penrose more than any of his colleagues who articulated the new, "official" interpretation of or response to Brigham Young's theological innovation. Indeed, his logic and interpretation became the pattern for virtually all twentieth-century Mormon responses to Adam-God.

IV

We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine.

Spencer W. Kimball, 1976

As time passed, the repudiation of Young's teachings on Adam-God became more pronounced. President Herber J. Grant wrote quite bluntly to an inquirer in 1931: "[To claim] that Adam had passed on to celestial glory through resurrection before he came here, and that afterwards he was appointed to this earth to die again, the second time becoming mortal . . . is not scriptural or according to the truth."¹⁰⁷

John A. Widtsoe, in his celebrated series of apologetic articles for the *Improvement Era* later republished as *Evidences and Reconciliations*, was even less restrained. To Widtsoe, "[t]hose who peddle the well-worn Adam-God myth" relied on "[a] long series of absurd and false deductions . . ." Referring to Brigham's April 1852 sermon and following Penrose's lead, Widtsoe continued,

Certain statements there are made confusing if read superficially, but very clear if read with their context. Enemies of President Brigham Young and of the Church have taken advantage of the opportunity and have used these statements repeatedly and widely to do injury to the reputation of President Young and the Mormon people. An honest reading of this sermon and of other reported discourses of President Brigham Young proves that the great second President of the Church held no such views as have been put into his mouth in the form of the Adam-God myth.¹⁰⁸

"Brigham Young," continued Widtsoe, "held the accepted doctrine of the Church, that God, the Father, and not Adam, is the earthly Father of Jesus President Young merely followed the established doctrine of the Church." Moreover, again with reference to the 1852 sermon, "nowhere can an intelligent reader confuse Adam with either member of the Godhead."

It should be noted that Widtsoe—and most later commentators on this subject—appears to have the misconception that Brigham Young's Adam-God theory alleged that Adam was Elohim. As has been previously discussed, Young, while placing Adam in the position most Latter-day Saints today

would reserve for Elohim, distinguished between "Father Adam" and one or two grandfather figures. One of the latter was Jehovah, Adam's father (thus the grandfather to Adam's descendants, including Christ); and the other was Elohim, Adam's grandfather.¹⁰⁹

Although other Church authorities have spoken against the Adam-God doctrine in recent decades, the most conspicuous spokesmen on the subject have been Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., and Mark E. Petersen. Smith, who as early as 1939 had asserted that Brigham Young's 1852 sermon was "in all probability . . . erroneously transcribed,"¹¹⁰ published an essay entitled, "Adam is Not the Father of Jesus Christ," in partial refutation of this sermon. After citing several Young statements, Smith said, "It is very clear from these expressions that President Brigham Young did not believe and did not teach, that Jesus Christ was begotten by Adam. He taught that Adam *died* and that Jesus Christ redeemed him."¹¹¹ [Emphasis in original.]

Mark E. Petersen is the author of the book presently accepted by the Church as the "official" response to the subject: *Adam, Who is He?* (1976).¹¹² His approach draws heavily on his predecessors, Penrose, Widtsoe and Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. The preface states:

We accept the ancient and modern scriptures as the word of God. They are our unerring guides. But some teach doctrines contrary to the scripture. Under these circumstances it is well to remember President Joseph Fielding Smith, who said: "If I ever say anything contrary to the scriptures, the scriptures prevail." It is so with everyone.

In commenting on this later in the text, he adds, "This applies to all, even to Brigham Young." Elder Petersen's main argument, however, centers on the alleged mistranscription of Brigham Young's April 1852 sermon.¹¹³ He also asks, of a sermon by Young in which the President separated the identities of Elohim and Adam, "Then could Adam possibly be Elohim, as some say?" Expanding on this point later, he continues,

We do not know what part Michael played in the creation of this earth. President Young did not make it clear. But that he did take part, President Young declares with certainty. The very fact that he did, the very fact that Elohim and Jehovah did likewise, the three working in a "quorum capacity," as President Young explains, again clears the air so far as Michael being Deity is concerned. He was not Deity. He was the Archangel working with Deity.¹¹⁴

Like Widtsoe, this author believes the pivotal question was whether Young equated Adam with Elohim.

The most significant recent comment on this subject by a Mormon leader—and the first public injunction by a Church President in decades—came during the October 1976 conference of the Church. President Spencer W. Kimball addressed the priesthood session, and, in the midst of his comments proclaimed the following:

We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine.¹¹⁵

That the subject, despite all this, has remained an active one is evidenced by the continued denunciations of Adam-God by Church authorities right up to the present day. One of the most widely publicized of these was a speech by Apostle Bruce R. McConkie in June 1980 to students at Brigham Young University in which he stated:

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.¹¹⁶

V

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.

Aldous Huxley

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. Had these beliefs evolved in to an official doctrine of the church, one supposes there would be relatively little controversy to discuss—but, they did not. 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.

NOTES

¹*Deseret News*, vol. 2 (April 17, 1852), no. 12 (hereafter cited as *DN*). Scholarly literature dealing with the Adam-God doctrine has been limited to Rodney Turner’s Master of Arts thesis, “The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology,” (Department of Religion, Brigham Young University, August 1953); the discovery of many heretofore unknown primary documents has now rendered it incomplete. Other treatments of Adam-God are largely slanted either “for” or “against” the doctrine. The latter group includes Elder Mark E. Petersen’s *Adam, Who is He?* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976) and Elwood G. Norris’ *Be Not Deceived: A*

Scriptural Refutation of the Adam-God Theory (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1978); both of these books ignore virtually every report—public or private—of Brigham Young’s teachings on the subject. A few fundamentalist or “anti-Mormon” treatments of Adam-God are Ogden Kraut’s *Michael/Adam* (n.p., n.d.; but published in 1972); Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co., 1972), pp. 173–178; Melaine Layton’s “And this is Life Eternal that they might know Thee, the only True God? Adam?” (n.p., n.d.); Chris Alex Vlachos, “Adam is God,” *Journal of Pastoral Practice*, vol. III (1979), no. 2, pp. 93–119; as well as a large number of articles, tracts and pamphlets by authors such as Fred Collier, Robert R. Black, Francis M. Darter, W. Gordon Hackney and Joseph W. Musser, most of which are on file at the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as LDS Archives).

²*Journal of Discourses by Brigham Young, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, His Two Counsellors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: LDS Book Depot, 1855–86), vol. 1, pp 50–51 (hereafter cited as *JD*).

³Samuel Rogers Journal, April 16, 1852, vol. 1, p. 179, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Lee Library).

⁴Hosea Stout Diary, April 9, 1852, p. 36, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

⁵Wilford Woodruff Journal (hereafter *WWJ*), April 9, 1852, LDS Archives. It is presently unknown what President Young may have taught privately about Adam-God at this early time, but his beliefs were apparently being embraced by other general authorities. The next day, April 10, Elder Albert Carrington announced: “Some have said that I was very presumptuous to say this Brother Brigham was my God and Saviour, Bro. Joseph was his God and one that gave Joseph the keys of the kingdom was his God which was Peter. Jesus Christ was his God and [the] Father of Jesus Christ was Adam.” (*WWJ*, April 10, 1852) Carrington’s remarks closely parallel certain aspects of the patriarchal order doctrine discussed below.

⁶Discourse, August 28, 1852, reported in *JD* 6:274–75; also found in *DN*, September 18, 1852.

⁷William Clayton Journal, October 3, 1852, LDS Archives. Orson Pratt’s beliefs are further detailed in the Thomas Evans Jeremy Journal (LDS Archives), entry for September 30, 1852: “He also said that he believed that Jesus Christ and Adam are brothers in the Spirit, and that Adam is not the God that he is praying unto.”

⁸William Clayton to Brigham Young, October 4, 1852, LDS Archives.

⁹Discourse, October 23, 1853, reported in *JD* 2:6. This disbelief in the biblical story of Adam’s creation became clearer from some remarks made one year later when Young stated that he had “not read the Bible for many years,” partly due to a professed lack of time. After citing a passage from the Bible, Young said, “I feel inclined here to make a little scripture. . . . [W]ere I under the necessity of making scripture extensively I should get Bro. Heber C. Kimball to make it, and then I would quote it. I have seen him do this when any of the Elders have been pressed by their opponents, and were a little at a loss; he would make a scripture for them to suite the case, that never was in the bible, though none the less true, and make their opponents swallow it as the words of an apostle, or [one] of the prophets. The Elder would then say, ‘Please turn to that scripture, (gentlemen) and read it for yourselves.’ No, they could not turn to it but they recollected it like the devil for fear of being caught. I will venture to make a little.” (Discourse, October 8, 1854, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives)

It is noteworthy that this sermon constituted one of Young’s most forceful statements on Adam-God (discussed below). As Young explained, what mattered was that his words were inspired by the Holy Ghost. This was a frequent theme during his administration as president of the church.

¹⁰*Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, Liverpool (hereafter cited as *LDSMS*), vol. XV (November 26, 1853), no. 48, pp. 769–70. The caption under the title stated “(From the Journal of Discourses).” This same excerpt appeared in the Church’s Australian publication, *The Zion’s Watchman* (Sidney), vol. 1 (September 16, 1854), nos. 18–19, pp. 137–39, with a supportive discourse printed on pages 139–44 by Elder John Jones.

¹¹*LDSMS*, vol. XV (December 3, 1853), no. 49, p. 780.

¹²*LDSMS*, vol. XV (December 10, 1853), no. 50, pp. 801–04.

¹³LDSMS, vol. XV (December 17, 1853), no. 51, p. 825.

¹⁴Discourse, February 19, 1854, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives. Young claimed that he addressed this issue “a year ago last conference” which would have been October 1853. His recollection of the remarks given, however, are identical with those given during his April 9, 1852, discourse.

Wilford Woodruff attended Young’s February 9, 1854 sermon and recorded in his diary on the same date: “He [Brigham Young] 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 Arkangel.”

¹⁵Discourse, February 5, 1852, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives.

¹⁶Discourse, January 12, 1862, reported in *JD* 9:148; also cf. Young’s remarks on February 8, 1857, reported in *JD* 4:215–19 (cited below). In their attempt to prove that Brigham taught exclusively what is presently accepted as orthodox doctrine, several church apologists have modified these key remarks by Young as found in *JD* 9:148; cf. this passage in John A. Widtsoe, comp., *Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1925), p. 159 [or p. 104 of the 1973 ed.]. This error was further promulgated by Joseph Fielding Smith in *Answers to Gospel Questions* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966), vol. 5, pp. 121–128, excerpted in the 1972–73 Melchizedek Priesthood manual bearing the same title (Salt Lake City: The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972), pp. 20–22; and by Mark E. Petersen, op. cit., pp. 15–16.

¹⁷Smith’s most direct sermons on this subject were given just before his death on April 7, 1844 (the “King Follett Discourse”) and June 16, 1844 (concerning the plurality of gods); see Notes 18 and 47 with supporting text, below.

¹⁸Some difficulty exists in specifying the precise identity of “Elohim” when discussed by early church authorities, given that Joseph Smith (and others) identified Elohim as a title denoting “many gods” (cf. Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Period I*, 7 vols., B. H. Roberts (ed.), (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973), vol. VI, pp. 475–76 (hereafter cited as *HC*). Smith noted the propensity of biblical scholars to identify Elohim as one god—he who created this earth, an interpretation still maintained by scholars; cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago, 1977), Micropaedia, vol. III, p. 863. This source noted, “Though *elohim* is plural in form, it is understood in the singular sense.” [emphasis in original] However, Smith argued that “[i]n the very beginning the Bible shows there is a plurality of Gods beyond the power of refutation. . . . The word *Eloheim* ought to be in the plural all the way through—Gods. The heads of the Gods appointed one God for us. . . .” (*HC*, vol. VI, p. 47; emphasis in original) In this sermon, the Prophet also claimed to have gleaned this perception from “the papyrus which is now in my house.” This correlates well with Joseph’s Book of Abraham (chapters 4 and 5) which describes the creation process as having been performed by “the gods.”

A later interpretation by Brigham Young identified Adam as “the chief manager in that operation.” (Discourse, April 20, 1856, reported in *JD* 3:319; also cf. Heber C. Kimball’s discourse, June 12, 1860, reported in *JD* 8:243–44) This interpretation helped give credence to Young’s belief of Adam’s having been a god before his experiences upon this earth. If Young’s belief was also held by Joseph Smith, the possibility that Smith was referring to Adam when he used the term “Elohim” is a consideration.

The difficulty surrounding a precise definition for the term “Elohim” was addressed by the First Presidency in 1916 when they wrote, “‘Elohim,’ is the literal Parent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and of the spirits of the human race.” (“The Father and the Son,” June 30, 1916; cited in James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), vol. V, pp. 23–24 [hereafter cited as *MFP*]) When compared with Young’s sermons on Adam-God, it is apparent that Brigham would probably have replaced “Elohim” in the 1916 statement with “Adam”; however, he would *not* have equated Adam with Elohim, for the president clearly saw them as two separate personages. Cf. his remarks on April 9, 1852: “It is true that the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum . . . perfectly represented in the Deity as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” (reported in *JD* 1:51) Also cf. Note 46, below.

¹⁹Brigham Young, as reported in the Joseph F. Smith Journal, entry for June 17, 1871 (LDS Archives).

²⁰Young’s declaration of “Jehovah” being the “Father” over Adam during his mortality seems to imply that “Jehovah” was also the *creator* of Adam, a position directly contradicting

today's belief that Jehovah is Jesus Christ (cf. D & C 110:1–3; also 109:34, 42, 56, 68; 128:9; and James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ: A Study of the Messiah and His Mission according to Holy Scriptures both Ancient and Modern* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971 ed.], pp. 36–38), and that both Jesus Christ and Adam were created by Elohim, their common Father in Heaven.

²¹Remarks given on June 26, 1854, reported in *LDSMS*, vol. XVI (August 5, 1854), no. 31, p. 482.

²²Remarks given on June 26, 1854, *ibid.*, p. 483.

²³Remarks given on June 28, 1854, *LDSMS*, vol. XVI (August 26, 1854), no. 34, p. 530.

²⁴Remarks given on June 28, 1854, *ibid.*, pp. 534–35.

²⁵WWJ, September 17, 1854. Young and Pratt had another discussion on October 1, 1854 where Young explained “about Adam begetting Christ after he had received his exaltation & that all have got to become Adams upon some Earth—or other.” (Historian’s Office Journal, same date, vol. 17, p. 148, LDS Archives)

²⁶DN, October 12, 1854.

²⁷WWJ, October 8, 1854. Woodruff noted that J. D. Watt and himself recorded the conference minutes. Young’s preliminary remarks suggest that this speech was given in response to Orson Pratt’s dissensions regarding Adam-God.

²⁸Discourse, October 8, 1854, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Archives. Young followed his “text” (paraphrased from the Bible, I Corinthians viii, 5–6; cited below) with some remarks cited above in Note 9. The gist of Brigham’s speech is also to be found in the John Pulsipher Papers, October 8, 1854, LDS Archives. Although not quoted above, Young claimed in this sermon that Adam physically died after his passage on this earth was completed (cf. D & C 107:53 and Moses 6:12); twenty-four years later he taught that Adam did *not* die, but that he was translated (cf. L. John Nuttall Journal, February 7, 1877, Lee Library [hereafter cited as Nuttall Journal]; also cf. discussion below on scriptural problems with the Adam-God doctrine). On the other hand, Joseph Smith reportedly taught that Adam was now a “just man made perfect”—i.e., a ministering servant to those previously sealed to eternal life, in spirit form (cf. Joseph Smith Diary, October 9, 1843 [recorded by Willard Richards], cited in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), p. 254; also cf. *HC*, vol. VI, pp. 51–52; and *Times & Seasons* (Nauvoo, Illinois: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1839–46), vol. IV (September 15, 1843), no. 21, pp. 331–32.

²⁹Joseph Lee Robinson Diary, entry dated “Oct. 6th.” [Young’s sermon was on the 8th], p. 62, Lee Library (typescript); also cf. Journal of Thomas D. Brown, Southern Indian Mission, pp. 88–89, LDS Archives.

³⁰Samuel W. Richards Journal, March 25, 1855, pp. 7–8, Lee Library (typescript).

³¹*LDSMS*, vol. XVII (March 31, 1855), no. 13, pp. 194–95; also cf. vol. XVII (December 15, 1855), no. 50, p. 787. As noted, Franklin D. Richards supported Young’s Adam-God doctrine. In 1856, the British LDS hymnal (*Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs, for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Europe* [11th edition, Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1856] contained a hymn (No. 306, p. 375) which defined the godhead as consisting of Adam, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. This hymn did not appear in later editions of the hymnal, nor does any record exist of its publication in any American LDS hymnals.

³²Discourse, recorded by Thomas Bullock, April 25, 1855, LDS Archives.

³³Discourse, February 8, 1857, reported in *JD* 4:215–19; cf. Heber C. Kimball’s approving remarks in *ibid.*, p. 222.

³⁴Discourse, October 7, 1857, reported in *JD* 5:331–32.

³⁵Discourse, October 9, 1859, reported in *JD* 7:285–86, 290. It is perhaps significant that during this same period, the First Presidency (Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Daniel H. Wells) issued a statement which specifically singled out Orson Pratt’s teachings in *The Seer* (Washington, D.C.), that man was literally created out of the earth’s dust (e.g., pp. 70, 275–79), stating: “With regard to the quotations and comments in the Seer as to Adam’s having been

formed 'out of the ground' and 'from the dust of the ground,' &c, it is deemed wisest to let that subject remain without further explanation at present; for it is written that we are to receive 'line upon line,' according to our faith and capacities, and the circumstances attending our progress.'" (January 29, 1860, cited in *MFP*, vol. II, p. 222)

This exact statement was reproduced in another First Presidency and Council of the Twelve censure of Pratt on August 23, 1865, cited in *ibid.*, pp. 233–34

³⁶WWJ, January 27, 1860.

³⁷Pratt's remarks of April 4 and 5, 1860 (cited below) clearly have reference to D & C 29:42: "But, behold, I say unto you that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son." This revelation, announced by the Prophet Joseph in September 1830, was first published in the Book of Commandments (Zion: W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833), Chapter XXIX; it was later republished in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams & Co.), Section X; except for a few minor punctuation changes, today's version is identical with both of these sources. Moses 5:4 is no less direct in meaning: Adam and Eve "heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them . . ."

³⁸April 4, 1860, Miscellaneous Papers, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives. Young apparently perceived himself to be protecting the Church from false doctrine, for in this same meeting he declared: "It is my duty to see that correct doctrine is taught and to guard the church from error, it is my calling."

³⁹The two other instances were on December 16, 1867 (WWJ, same date) and May 14, 1876 (Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, same date, LDS Archives; cf. Journal of the Southern Utah Mission, same date, Lee Library.) Also cf. Brigham's discourse of September 25, 1870, reported in *JD* 13:249–50; and his sermon of June 8, 1873, reported in the *DN*, June 18, 1873, pp. 308–09 (cited below).

⁴⁰Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, *Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor's Office, 1882), pp. 31, 36–37; Whitney's testimony is somewhat tarnished, however, due to the fact that she was but fifteen years old when she married Smith, and that her published claims were not printed until thirty-nine years after the fact. Johnson's account is found in his letter to George S. Gibbs (1903), typescript, LDS Archives. He wrote: "He [i.e., Joseph Smith] taught us that God was the great head of human procreation—was really and truly the father of both our spirits and our bodies. . . ." (p. 13) The value of Johnson's record is also lessened since remembrance of this alleged incident came fifty-nine years after Smith's death.

⁴¹Today's D & C 27:11. Although James E. Talmage's italic preface in today's version states that this part of the revelation was received by Joseph Smith in September 1830, it did *not* appear in the revelation as it was first published in either the Book of Commandments (Chapter XXVIII) or in *The Evening and the Morning Star*, vol. I (March 1833), no. 10; both of these were dated September 4, 1830, and both had identical texts. The added text which constitutes verse 11 in today's version was first published in the 1835 D & C (Section L). Joseph may not have first taught this principle until late 1833, for in a letter from Oliver Cowdery to John Whitmer, dated January 1, 1834 in Kirtland, he explained "Since I came down I have been informed from a proper source that the Angel Michael is no less than our father Adam, and Gabriel is Noah." (Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California); also cf. his statement in the *Evening and Morning Star*, vol. 2 (May 1834), no. 20, p. 308; he may have learned this during a blessing by Joseph described in Note 44 below.

It is unclear, however, precisely when the significance of this "pre-earth" identity of Adam was first realized by Joseph, for in his 1836 "Vision of the Celestial Kingdom," he claimed to have seen "Father Adam and Abraham and Michael and my father and my mother, [and] my brother Alvin. . . ." (Joseph Smith Diary, January 21, 1836, LDS Archives; emphasis mine.) The Prophet's vision was canonized by the Church on April 3, 1976. The original handwritten "Manuscript History of the Church," Book B-1, p. 695 (LDS Archives) recorded the vision as found in Smith's diary; but the reference to Michael was deleted when the manuscript was first published in the *Deseret News*, September 4, 1852. The canonized version (now D & C 137) has also omitted the Michael reference; cf. *HC*, vol. II, pp. 380–81; and T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1873), pp. 63–64.

One conceivable explanation for the 1836 account is Joseph Smith's possible role in originating the use of "Adam" (and "Eve") as a name title—in this case "Father Adam" and "Michael-

(Adam)" being two different personages. (Cf. Moses 1:34 and 4:26) It is significant that Brigham Young is reported to have said in 1845 in the Nauvoo Temple that "[i]n the first place the name of man is given, a new name, Adam, signifying the first man,—or Eve, the first Woman—Adam's name was more ancient than he was—It was the name of a man long before him, who enjoyed the priesthood. . . . After his fall, another name was give [sic] to Adam." (Heber C. Kimball Journal, No. 93, November 21, 1845 to January 7, 1846, entry for December 27, 1845, LDS Archives) Just fourteen months later, Young stated: ". . . we are all father Adams. . . . I want to stop your calling me father Young, in the Priesthood, the term properly applies to father Adam, & to our father in heaven." (Willard Richards Journal, entry for February 16, 1847, LDS Archives)

⁴²Discourse, before August 8, 1839, reported in the Willard Richards Pocket Companion, as cited in Ehat and Cook, op. cit., pp. 8–9; cf. HC, vol. III, pp. 385–87. According to Orson Hyde's "A Diagram of the Kingdom of God," (LDSMS, vol. 9 [January 15, 1847], pp. 23–24) the doctrine of patriarchal order principally defined the future structural order within the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. With Adam at the head of the human family, other families would be sealed in "patriarchal order" to their priesthood leader (now understood to be the immediate father), with he being sealed to his priesthood leader in succession to Adam. Adam in turn would be sealed to Jesus Christ who would then be sealed to the Father. LDS theology maintains that all of these participating sealed priesthood leaders would, with their wives, be gods capable of their own eternal increase.

⁴³Discourse, October 5, 1840, original ms. in handwriting of Robert B. Thompson, LDS Archives, as cited in Ehat and Cook, op. cit., pp. 39–40; cf. HC, vol. IV, pp. 207–09.

⁴⁴Cf. D & C 107:53–56 in today's edition. This revelation reportedly was received on March 28, 1835 in Kirtland; however, the Kirtland Revelation Book's manuscript version (LDS Archives) does not contain these verses. Today's text is virtually identical with that in the 1835 D & C. Verses 53–55 are quoted almost verbatim in a blessing given by the Prophet to his father on December 18, 1833, recorded by Oliver Cowdery in the Manuscript History of the Church, same date, LDS Archives (cited in Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], pp. 38–39). This passage was omitted, however, when John Taylor printed this part of the "History of Joseph Smith" in the *Times and Seasons*, vol. VI (July 1, 1845), no. 12, p. 947.

⁴⁵D & C 78:15–16, today's edition. While the present version is practically identical to the 1835 edition's text, the earlier handwritten text in the Kirtland Revelation Book is significantly different in form. "Holy One of Zion" is recorded there as "Holy One of *Israel*" [emphasis mine]; and the phrase "who hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman" (vs. 15), as well as the important passage in vs. 16 which places Michael under Christ (cited above in the text) are not recorded at all. Joseph Smith's revision to this text was therefore made between March 1, 1832 (date given) and Fall 1835 when it was first published in the D & C; it was never typeset in the Book of Commandments.

⁴⁶Indeed, the apparent speaker in D & C 78 refers to himself not only as "Lord God" and "Holy One of Zion," but also as "your Redeemer"—a clear allusion to Christ. D & C 80, announced the same month, is even more explicit: ". . . your Redeemer, even Jesus Christ. . . ." Notably, Orson Pratt once testified in a church conference held on April 7, 1843 that "It [i.e., the Ancient of Days] cannot be the Father[.]" (*Times and Seasons*, vol. IV [May 15, 1843], no. 13, p. 204) While Joseph Smith—present during Pratt's sermon—corrected one statement in his speech concerning "fundamental parts," he did not object to Pratt's reasoning that the Ancient of Days (Adam) could not have been the Father (of mankind's spirits); cf. HC, vol. V, p. 339.

⁴⁷The evolution of Mormonism's Godhead doctrine is discussed in Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone*, vol. 5 (July–August 1980), no. 4, pp. 24–33. Joseph Smith's April 7, 1844 sermon has been reconstructed in Stan Larsen, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *Brigham Young University Studies* (hereafter cited as *BYUS*), vol. 18 (Winter 1978), no. 2, pp. 193–208. Background data is found in Donald Q. Cannon, "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective," *ibid.*, pp. 179–92; and Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," *ibid.*, pp. 209–25. The June 16, 1844, sermon is in HC, vol. VI, pp. 476–77; the belief in a patriarchal lineage of gods may have been taught by Hyrum Smith a year previous to Joseph's sermon (cf. George Laub Journal, April 27, 1843, LDS Archives, as cited in Eugene England, "George Laub's Nauvoo Journal," *BYUS*, vol. 18 (Winter 1978), no. 2, pp. 175–77. Shortly before his death, Hyrum Smith was also quoted as saying "there were

Prophets before Adam—and Joseph has the Spirit of all the Prophets.” (Thomas Bullock Journal, entry for April 28, 1844, LDS Archives)

⁴⁸*Warsaw Message*, February 4, 1844. One additional source is occasionally cited as further evidence of Joseph teaching Adam-God: this is a brief passage in the “anti-Mormon” *Nauvoo Expositor* (vol. I [June 7, 1844], no. 1, p. 2) where it mentions God’s “liability to fall with all his creations”; the assumption is that this is an allusion to Brigham’s belief that Adam “decesterialized” himself upon coming to this earth. The context of this passage, however, clearly shows that God will “fall” if he “varies from the law unto which he is subjected,” a Mormon belief which has nothing to do with the Adam-God doctrine.

⁴⁹John Taylor, *The Government of God* (London: W. Bowden, 1852), pp. 28, 30; Orson Pratt, “The Kingdom of God,” Part I, (October 31, 1848) in his *A Series of Pamphlets* (Liverpool: R. James, 1851); Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning* (New York: W. Sanford, 1837), esp. pp. 85–86, 96, and 111, reprint edition (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978). The complete absence of any hint that Adam-God was taught before 1852 is further substantiated by a literature search of over 1,000 doctrinal books, epistles, broadsides, hymnals, “anti-Mormon” texts, speeches, etc. published between 1826 and 1852, which failed to turn up any evidence. (A complete list of items reviewed is in Chad Flake, ed., *A Mormon Bibliography, 1830–1930* [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1978], pp. 814–15.) Consultation with several individuals familiar with unpublished manuscripts and diaries dating from this period (e.g. Peter L. Crowley, James B. Allen, Reed C. Durham, Jr., H. Michael Marquardt, and others) also yielded nothing. As one member wrote, Brigham Young’s April 9, 1852, Adam-God sermon represented “new doctrine.” (Lorenzo Brown Journal, April 10, 1852, Lee Library)

⁵⁰Early references to Adam-God often identified it in terms of Brigham Young’s April 1852 sermon, thereby suggesting that this represented its initial presentation; this is readily seen in the sermons and writings cited throughout the present text and notes.

⁵¹Solomon F. Kimball Papers, “Sacred History,” LDS Archives. Wrote Stenhouse, “Brother Heber had considerable pride in relating to his intimate friends that he was the source of Brigham’s revelation on the ‘Adam-deity.’ In a moment of reverie, Heber said: ‘Brother Brigham, I have an idea that Adam is not only our father, but our God.’ That was enough; Brigham snapped at the novelty, and announced it with all the flourish of a new made revelation.” (op. cit., p. 561, fn.)

⁵²Cf. Gary James Bergera, “The Orson Pratt—Brigham Young Controversies: Conflict Within the Quorums, 1853–1868,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. XIII (Summer 1980), no. 2, pp. 7–49.

⁵³April 5, 1860, Miscellaneous Papers, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives. On October 7, 1869, however, Pratt taught that “[s]ome angels are Gods, and still possess the lower office called angels. Adam is called Archangel, yet he is a God.” (reported in *JD* 13:187)

⁵⁴Discourse, May 20, 1860, reported in *DN*, June 27, 1860, pp. 129–30.

⁵⁵Discourse, October 8, 1861, manuscript entitled “A Few Words of Doctrine,” Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives.

⁵⁶Many of Young’s public statements on Adam-God became allusionary and less direct than those previously given. For a sample of several minor statements by Brigham related to Adam-God, cf. *JD* 9:283 (February 23, 1862); *JD* 11:119–23 (June 18, 1865); *JD* 11:326–27 (February 10, 1867); *WWJ*, May 12, 1867; *LDSMS*, vol. 31, p. 267 (February 4, 1869); *JD* 13:249–50 (September 25, 1870); *JD* 14:136 (May 21, 1871); *JD* 16:46 (May 18, 1873); and *JD* 18:326 (December 31, 1876).

Other church members such as Eliza R. Snow published additional support in favor of Young’s beliefs on Adam-God. This body of literature is quite large; due to both space limitations and the nonauthoritative nature of these statements, they will not be discussed. For a partial treatment, however, see Rodney Turner, op. cit.; a more complete collection without commentary may be examined in Fred Collier, “The Mormon God,” (unpublished manuscript), copy on file in the LDS Archives and Lee Library.

⁵⁷Discourse, July 8, 1863, reported in *JD*:10:230–31.

⁵⁸Discourse, November 13, 1863, reported in *JD* 13:308–09.

⁵⁹Discourse, April 17, 1870, reported in *JD* 13:311.

⁶⁰WWJ, December 16, 1867. Young's comments were made only one week after he re-established the School's operation. Also cf. Brigham Young, discourse, November 30, 1862, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives; and WWJ, December 11, 1869. The LDS Journal History's entry (LDS Archives) for this last date is almost identical, except the words "for that was our Father Adam" have been handwritten and inserted above the typed version which omitted this phrase.

⁶¹"Minutes of the School of the Prophets, Provo, Utah, June 8, 1868," LDS Archives (excerpted from a typescript copy located at the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City).

⁶²Remarks given on October 15, 1870, *Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minute Book*, LDS Archives. [Emphasis in original.] Apostle Orson Hyde was recorded three months later to have taught to a Manti, Utah audience that "Adam is our God for this Planet (Earth)." (Cf. Jens Christian Anderson Weiby Daybook, as well as his Diary entries for January 25, 1871, LDS Archives).

⁶³*Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minute Book*, entry for June 9, 1873, LDS Archives. Most of these men were prominent members of the church; Wallace became president of the Salt Lake Stake in 1874 (through 1876), and Joseph F. Smith became president of the church in 1901.

⁶⁴Remarks given on October 15, 1870, Joseph F. Smith Journal, LDS Archives.

⁶⁵Remarks given on June 9, 1873, *Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minute Book*, LDS Archives.

⁶⁶T. B. H. Stenhouse, op. cit., p. 492. Stenhouse continued, "But of them all, one only, Orson Pratt, has dared to make a public protest against that doctrine." The only other known statement made by Young which suggests (but does not directly state) a tie-in of Adam-God to Joseph Smith was made on June 8, 1873, cited below.

⁶⁷Discourse, June 8, 1873, reported in *DN*, June 18, 1873, pp. 308–09. This is the only known statement by Young where he directly claims that God revealed "that Adam is our father and God" to him.

⁶⁸*Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minute Book*, entry for June 9, 1893. Notably, "Prest. Young queried wither the brethren thought he was too liberal in launching out on this doctrine before the Gentiles."

⁶⁹Cf. "Memoranda" of L. John Nuttall to Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, June 3, 1892, Lee Library. Nuttall stated that "[a] copy of the Lecture is kept at the St. George Temple, in which President Young refers to Adam in his creation, &c." The transcript of this lecture as found in Nuttall's journal (cited below) was probably made directly from the temple copy. According to Wilford Woodruff (WWJ, February 1, 1877) and Nuttall (Nuttall Journal, February 1 and 2, 1877), the lecture was first given by Young on February 1, 1877.

⁷⁰Nuttall Journal, February 7, 1877, Nuttall—much impressed by Young's remarks—closed this entry saying, "I felt myself much blessed in being permitted to Associate with such men and hear such instructions as they savored of life to me."

⁷¹Two of the only articles published during this period which supportively mention Adam-God concepts appeared in *The Contributor* (Salt Lake City: Contributor Company, 1879–96; this was the forerunner to the church's *Improvement Era*); cf. Thomas W. Brookbank, "Biblical Cosmogony," vol. VI (April 1887), p. 218; and J. F. Gibbs, "Our Father and God," vol. VI, p. 78. The only other prominent pro-Adam-God article published during this period was Joseph Taylor's speech cited below.

⁷²Edward Stevenson Diary, entry for March 7, 1880, LDS Archives. "Bp. Hess," in attendance, "said that he could endorse all that had been said although he did not understand all yet it made him feel good & like living his religion."

⁷³*Ibid.*, entry for March 4, 1882.

⁷⁴Abraham H. Cannon Journal, February 22, 1888, vol. 10, pp. 178–79, Lee Library. On Sunday, June 23, 1889, George Q. Cannon reiterated his beliefs to his son, Abraham, who recorded: "He believes that Jesus Christ is Jehovah, and that Adam is His Father and our God[.]" (Abraham H. Cannon Journal, same date) Also cf. George Q. Cannon's speech published in May 1889, *LDSMS*, vol. 51, p. 278; as well as "The Origin of Man," *LDSMS*, vol. 23 (October 1861), no. 41, p. 654.

⁷⁵The speech was read in the Logan temple on June 2, 1888, and published in the *Deseret News Weekly*, December 29, 1888, pp. 19–27; the *News* published no commentary other than the speech's text. One presumes that the talk covered novel ground or it would not have been worth reporting. If this is true, one might imply that the 1877 lecture at the veil by Brigham Young was no longer being given as early as 1888.

⁷⁶Eg. Ogden Kraut, op. cit., p. 101. This individual was an old Sunday School teacher and close friend of C. Jess Groesbeck; according to Groesbeck, this member, after several conversations where he attempted to discourage Groesbeck's questions on Adam-God [he reportedly discounted the doctrine as "Brigham's theory"], one day "broke down" and recalled his surprise when upon receiving his endowment in the Salt Lake Temple in 1902, to learn that "Adam was our Father and God" and that "Eve bore our spirits." Upon returning from his mission in 1904 or 1905, he asked his father about this teaching in the temple who declined to discuss it; when he again went through shortly thereafter, the Adam-God portion had been removed. This member was in his late 70's when he related the incident to Groesbeck in 1959 [the same information was related to Groesbeck frequently over the next four years until 1963], and reportedly he had a very sharp memory; he died in the late 1960's. (Personal correspondence, C. Jess Groesbeck to D. J. Buerger, January 27, 1981, June 16, 1981, and telephone conversation on June 19, 1981.)

While this is the sole testimony that Young's lecture was taught in LDS temples as late as 1904 or 1905, a few items which may support it should be mentioned: First, the timing. If the Young lecture was to be removed, this period—in the midst of intense national scrutiny due to the Reed Smoot hearings in Washington, D.C.—would seemingly have been the most likely. Additionally, the Salt Lake *Tribune's* 1906 expose which trailed Walter Wolfe's Smoot testimony claimed that during the lecture before the veil, "Especially is it taught that Adam was not made out of the dust of this earth; that he was begotten as any other man is begotten, and that when he came here he brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. I have heard that the sermon was the one delivered by Brigham Young at the dedication of the St. George Temple." (*Mysteries of the Endowment House and Oath of Vengeance of the Mormon Church* [Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Tribune, 1906], p. 8) Notably, however, this basic claim was repeated in 1920 by Stewart Martin, *The Mystery of Mormonism* (London: Odhams Press, Ltd.), p. 262; and again in 1931 by Dr. W. M. Paden in his *Temple Mormonism: Its Evolution, Ritual and Meaning* (New York: A. J. Montgomery) who claimed: "The church authorities do not emphasize this doctrine [i.e., Adam-God] today but it remains in their Temple ritual. . . ." (pp. 21, 26) More recent exposés do not mention Adam-God as being part of the endowment ceremony.

Despite these exposés and this one testimony, however, it would be imprudent to claim that Young's lecture had therefore been regularly given in *all* of the temples, particularly in light of the evidence presented above in the text. It may well be that the lecture *was* given in the St. George Temple, at least until the late 1890s. This is supported by St. George Historical Record minutes (LDS Archives) on November 8, 1890, December 13, 1890, May 15, 1891, and May 22, 1891 wherein Edward Bunker, Sr. taught that "erroneous teaching was given in the Lecture at the Veil"; "he [Bunker] did not believe Adam was our God." The St. George stake high council forwarded the matter to the First Presidency for further review. (These minutes are cited in Fred C. Collier, comp., *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 1 [Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., second edition, 1981, first printing], pp. 168–73.) One year later, ostensibly in response to this incident, L. John Nuttall's 1892 summary memorandum to the First Presidency (of events surrounding Brigham Young's 1877 St. George composition of the lecture at the veil) closed by stating that "A copy of the Lecture is kept at the St. George Temple, in which President Young refers to Adam in his creation, &c." Nuttall did not indicate that copies were also kept at the other two temples in Logan, which commenced operations in 1884, nor in Manti which began in 1888. Nor was mention made of the Salt Lake "Endowment House" (operations conducted during 1852–1889). Just eight days after Nuttall drafted this memorandum, Presidents Woodruff and Cannon declared that "it was not necessary that we should [teach] or endorse the doctrine that some men taught that Adam was the Father of Jesus Christ." (See Note 85, below) While this does not prove that Adam-God was not taught in temple ceremonies other than in St. George, it does suggest that official backing for teaching the doctrine was lacking. It is not presently known when action was implemented relative to changing the St. George lecture before the veil.

It should be noted parenthetically that extensive revisions *were* made to the endowment ceremony by a special committee of apostles during 1921–1927; members included George F. Richards (chairman), David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., Stephen L. Richards, and John

A. Widtsoe, with James E. Talmage, being added in 1924. George F. Richards was the primary mover of this task force as he attempted to codify and simplify the ceremony (*cf.* his journal entries during this period, LDS Archives).

⁷⁷Brigham Young, Jr. Journal, entry for October 12, 1897 (LDS Archives); also *cf.* his entry for December 16, 1897 (cited below); Edward Stephenson Diary, entries for July 22, 1892, February 28, 1896 and March 3, 1896 (the latter two cited below in Note 86); Anthon H. Lund Journal, entry for October 13, 1897 (LDS Archives); and John Henry Smith Journal, entry for January 11, 1899 (University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah).

⁷⁸George Q. Cannon Journal, entry for January 17, 1878, as cited in Joseph J. Cannon, "George Q. Cannon—Relations With Brigham Young," *The Instructor*, vol. 80 (June 1945), no. 6, p. 259; Cannon's journal entry was written just a few months after Brigham's death. A similar point was made in an 1892 meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, this time with specific reference to the question of "whether Adam is our God or not." (*Cf.* Abraham H. Cannon Journal, entry for May 26, 1892)

⁷⁹Samuel W. Taylor, *The Kingdom or Nothing: The Life of John Taylor, Militant Mormon* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1976), p. 278. Some of the more obvious quotations from *Mediation and Atonement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882) which are in disagreement with Young are his citing of a scripture (Moses, 5:8) on pp. 62–63 in which the Lord tells Adam he should repent and "call upon God, in the name of the Son, for evermore. . ."; a poem on page 70, which says in part, "And men did live a holy race/And worship Jesus face to face/In Adam-ondi-Ahman" (composed by W. W. Phelps and first published in the *Messenger and Advocate*, vol. 1 [June 1835], no. 9, pp. 144); a quotation from the Pearl of Great Price on page 37 in which "[God] called upon our Father Adam by his own voice, saying, I am God . . . be baptized . . . in the name of mine Only Begotten Son"; and finally, pages 134–136, which is a discussion of D & C 29, and included Taylor saying ". . . it is also stated that Lucifer was before Adam; so was Jesus. And Adam . . . was commanded . . . to call upon God in His [the Son's] name for ever more. . . ."

⁸⁰Franklin D. Richards, *A Compendium of the Faith and Doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Liverpool: Orson Pratt; and London: LDS Book Depot, 1857), pp. 148, 152, 153–54; F. D. Richards and J. A. Little, *A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882), pp. 3–5, 179–83.

⁸¹Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (1855), [5th ed., Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., 1891], pp. 3, 5, 50–51; Orson Spencer, *Letters Exhibiting the Most Prominent Doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1874), Letter VIII, pp. 91–101; Charles W. Penrose, "Mormon" *Doctrine, Plain and Simple, or Leaves from the Tree of Life* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), pp. 1–12; John Nicholson, *The Preceptor* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1883); B. H. Roberts, *The Gospel, an Exposition of its First Principles* (Salt Lake City: The Contributor Co., 1888), p. 110; and Roberts' 1893 revised edition of *The Gospel* which includes the addition of *Man's Relationship to Deity*, pp. 266–71.

⁸²James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1899), p. 29. Talmage's *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1915) went much further, declaring: ". . . Jesus Christ was and is the Creator, the God who revealed Himself to Adam. . . ." (p. 32); and "Unto Adam . . . [God] the Father revealed Himself, attesting the Godship of the Christ. . . ." (p. 39) Other prominent books of this era (*e.g.* B. H. Roberts' *New Witness for God* [1895], Charles W. Penrose's *Rays of Living Light From the Doctrines of Christ* [1898], and Matthias F. Cowley, *Cowley's Talks on Doctrine* [1902]) contain nothing significantly noteworthy aside from Cowley's comment, "We learn from the Pearl of Great Price that before Adam departed to the life beyond, God revealed to him the plan of salvation" (pp. 112–13).

⁸³David John, Vice President of the Brigham Young Academy, recounted a sermon by Elder Edward Stevenson given at the B.Y.A. on January 19, 1896, on Adam-God "which was not generally accepted by. . . his hearers. . . ." Two B.Y.A. professors, Joseph B. Keeler and George H. Brimhall (later president of B.Y.A.), had John draft an article on Adam-God for use in their theological classes; they too disagreed with Stevenson's belief in Adam-God and discussed their differences with him—however, their feeling was the issue was too "delicate" to submit to the First Presidency. *Cf.* David John Diary, entry for November 1, 1900, Lee Library.

⁸⁴Cf. *The True Latter-day Saints' Herald*, vol. 1 (November 1860), pp. 259–65; and vol. 1 (December 1860), pp. 269–73, 280–85. A few other anti-Mormon writings from this period are briefly examined in Rodney Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–74.

⁸⁵Charles Walker Journal, June 11, 1892, LDS Archives; typescript at Lee Library. This incident involved a high council meeting at St. George where church president Wilford Woodruff and his counselor, George Q. Cannon, addressed the “false doctrines” which were being promulgated by Edward Bunker, Sr., of Bunkerville, Nevada. Bunker’s beliefs were not unlike those advanced years earlier by Orson Pratt, when Pratt felt that men should worship God’s intelligence rather than God himself. Woodruff’s remarks made pointed reference to Brigham Young’s strong refutation of Pratt’s beliefs. He carefully pointed out, however, that God has and will reveal many “glorious things” which can’t be “proved” by the “old Bible.” (Cf. Note 76, above)

⁸⁶Discourse, April 7, 1895, reprinted in *LDSMS*, vol. 57, p. 355. The proscription apparently did not extend to the private councils of the hierarchy. Edward Stevenson wrote the following March, 1896, of having had “more pleasure than usual with a deep talk with Pres. L. Snow on the subject”; others spoke of discussions in October 1897 and January 1899, in addition to the December 1897 deliberations mentioned in the text. As to the identities and relative standing of the personages under discussion, Stevenson wrote in his diary for February 28, 1896: “Certainly Heloheim, and Jehovah stands before Adam, or else I am very much mistaken. Then 1st Heloheim 2d Jehovah, 3d Michael-Adam, 4th Jesus Christ, Our Elder Brother, in the other World from whence our spirits come. . . . Then Who is Jehovah? The only begoton Son of Heloheim on Jehovahs world.” This is in essence what Brigham told the School of the Prophets nearly three decades earlier.

⁸⁷*Fresno Morning Republican*, December 3, 1897; also cf. the following numbers of the *Republican*: October 30, 1897; November 10, 1897; November 12, 1897; November 16, 1897; November 19, 1897; and December 5, 1897.

⁸⁸Ephraim H. Nye to Franklin D. Richards, December 4, 1897, E. H. Nye Papers, Mission Letter Book, Lee Library.

⁸⁹Franklin D. Richards Journal, December 16, 1897, LDS Archives.

⁹⁰Brigham Young, Jr. Journal, December 16, 1897, LDS Archives.

⁹¹Franklin D. Richards to Ephraim H. Nye, December 18, 1897, Franklin D. Richards Letter-book, pp. 363–64, Richards Family Collection, LDS Archives. On March 8, 1898, Richards wrote Nye indicating that he and Joseph F. Smith had tried to get Nye’s article reprinted in the *Deseret News*, but the *News* declined their request.

⁹²Discourse, November 28, 1898, reported in *Proceedings of the First Sunday School Convention of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1899), pp. 87–88. Cannon’s reference to “two personages in the Godhead” is based on Joseph Smith’s remarks in his “Fifth Lecture on Faith” which remained in the D & C until 1921; cf. Thomas G. Alexander, *op. cit.*; and N. B. Lundwall’s reprint of the *Lectures* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 48–49.

⁹³Charles W. Penrose to Quincy Anderson, February 17, 1900, published in the *Deseret Evening News*, March 21, 1900, p. 4.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵“Our Father Adam,” *Improvement Era*, vol. 5 (September 1902), no. 11, p. 873.

⁹⁶Edward Bunker, Jr. to Joseph F. Smith, February 9, 1902, LDS Archives. [Emphasis in original.] Bunker was the son of Edward Bunker, Sr., who was rebuked by church presidents Woodruff and Cannon a decade earlier; cf. Notes 76 and 85, above.

⁹⁷Joseph F. Smith to Edward Bunker, Jr., February 27, 1902, Joseph F. Smith Letter Books, pp. 26–27, LDS Archives.

⁹⁸B. H. Roberts, *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1903), pp. 42–43. On pp. 243–49, Roberts cites a sermon by Joseph Smith which discussed Adam’s stew-

ardship *under* Christ's; he also cited one sermon by Brigham Young which mentions Adam-God concepts (pp. 259–65). Roberts' comments in 1908 suggest that he personally did not believe the Adam-God doctrine (cf. his *70's course in Theology*, vol. II, Salt Lake City: Skelton Publishing Co., 1908, pp. 230–32). Compare Roberts' 1902 comments with those made by Anthon H. Lund, then a member of the First Presidency: "Men had ridiculed the elders for believing that Adam was a God. We are not ashamed of this doctrine. Jesus said in speaking to the Jews in relation to Abraham, that they were Gods unto whom the word of God comes. But though we look upon Adam as a God, we worship the same God that Adam worshipped in the Garden of Eden." (*LDSMS*, vol. 64, [1902], p. 742)

⁹⁹First Presidency Statement, Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund, *Improvement Era*, vol. 13 (November 1909), no. 1, pp. 75–81 [esp. p. 80]; also in *MFP*, vol. IV, pp. 199–206. This statement was actually composed by Orson F. Whitney who wrote it at the request of the First Presidency; cf. Brigham Young University Faculty Minutes, vol. 10 (January 1909–June 1913), September 25, 1909, p. 45, Lee Library. This statement alluded to the issue of organic evolution, but no distinct official church position relative to that theory has yet been given. The best overview of this subject is Duane E. Jeffery, "Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface," *Dialogue*, vol. VIII (Autumn-Winter 1973), nos. 3/4, pp. 41–75; also cf. "Seers, Savants and Evolution: A Continuing Dialogue," *Dialogue*, vol. IX (Autumn 1974), no. 3, pp. 21–38; Richard Sherlock, "A Turbulent Spectrum: Mormon Reactions to the Darwinist Legacy," *Journal of Mormon History*, vol. V (1978), pp. 33–59; and Richard Sherlock, "'We Can See No Advantage to a Continuation of the Discussion: The Roberts/Smith/Talmage Affair,'" *Dialogue*, vol. XIII (Fall 1980), no. 3, pp. 63–78.

¹⁰⁰*Improvement Era*, vol. 13 (April 1910), p. 570. Despite the non-committal attitude portrayed by this editorial, President Smith did apparently believe that Adam was *born* on this earth. On December 7, 1913, he testified to church members in a stake conference at Mesa, Arizona: "The Son, Jesus Christ, grew and developed into manhood the same as you or I, as likewise did God, his father grow and develop to the Supreme Being that he now is. Man was born of woman, Christ the Savior, was born of woman. Adam, our earthly parent, was also born of woman into this world, the same as Jesus and you and I." (reported in *DN*, December 27, 1913, Section 3, p. 7) This testimony was later printed during Heber J. Grant's presidency in *DN*, Church Section, September 19, 1936, pp. 2, 8.

¹⁰¹First Presidency Statement, Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund and Charles W. Penrose, January 31, 1912, *Improvement Era*, vol. 15 (March 1912), pp. 417–18; also in *MFP*, vol. IV, pp. 264–65. Also cf. a frequently circulated letter from the First Presidency to President Samuel O. Bennion (president of the Central States mission for the church), February 20, 1912, LDS Archives; cited in *MFP*, vol. IV, pp. 266–67. The Bennion letter specifically addressed the question of Young's teaching in *JD* 1:50–51 (April 9, 1852) that Adam was the father of Jesus Christ; the argument given to negate this belief (again written in Penrose's style) implied that Young's statement had been misinterpreted. The First Presidency did not discuss any of Young's other sermons on Adam-God.

¹⁰²Thomas Clawson Journal, April 8, 1912, Utah State Historical Society; also cf. Anthony W. Ivins Journal, April 8, 1912, Utah State Historical Society.

¹⁰³This pamphlet was reprinted in the *Improvement Era*, vol. 19 (August 1916), pp. 934–42; also cited in *MFP*, vol. V, pp. 23–34. One year before in the April 1915 General Conference, James E. Talmage spoke concerning the title, "The Son of Man," as applied to Jesus Christ. Despite the approval of the same material by church president Joseph F. Smith—incorporated in his book, *Jesus the Christ*—Charles W. Penrose was "of the opinion that the wide-spread publication of this doctrine would cause difficulty to the elders in the field, who he [Penrose] thinks would be confronted with the charge that we as a people worship a man." (James E. Talmage Journal, May 10, 1915, Lee Library) The Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve voted to change a few sentences of Talmage's text for publication in the official conference report. A copy of his original text is found in Talmage's journal, *ibid.* Cf. Penrose's remarks with his *Improvement Era* article of September 1902 (cited above); among Penrose's reservations may have been his reluctance to accept Joseph Smith's "King Follett Discourse" as having been accurately recorded, for it was there that Smith publicly advanced his radical new doctrines on the nature of God (cf. Penrose's testimony in *Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, A Senator From the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat* [Washington, D.C.: U.S.

Government Printing Office, 1904], vol. 1, pp. 440–42, on December 20, 1904. It is notable that his only stated reservations on the accuracy of talks reported in the *Journal of Discourses* concerned Joseph Smith's sermons, of which only four are reported in the *Journal*.)

¹⁰⁴Cf. Note 18 above.

¹⁰⁵Discourse, reported in *Conference Report of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1916), April 1916, pp. 16–17 (hereafter cited as CR).

¹⁰⁶Discourse, reported in CR, April 22, 1922, p. 23

¹⁰⁷Heber J. Grant to Bishop Joseph H. Eldredge, February 26, 1931, LDS Archives; also in *MFP*, vol. V, pp. 289–90. B. H. Roberts' remarks reported in *DN*, July 23, 1921 are more tempered: "As a matter of fact, the 'Mormon' Church does not teach [the Adam-God] 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."

¹⁰⁸*Improvement Era*, vol. 48 (November 1938), no. 11, pp. 652, 690; also in *Evidences and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), pp. 67–71.

¹⁰⁹The possibility that a few Church authorities have, to some extent, misperceived the full parameters of Young's former teachings seems likely, given that most of this century's discussions on Adam-God only consider one sermon—that of April 9, 1852. Lack of familiarity with his other statements could easily have led to a misunderstanding of Young's beliefs. In 1977, for example, I wrote to President Spencer W. Kimball and asked what his specific perception of the Adam-God doctrine was. The response, signed by Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner and Marion G. Romney, was sent to my bishop. They stated that Brigham Young had been accused over the years of having taught that "Adam was God." They pointed out, however, that there were "many places" where Young taught that "Adam and God were different beings," citing two statements by Young (*JD* 10:230-31 and *JD* 13:311, quoted earlier in the text above) to substantiate that position.

¹¹⁰*DN*, Church News Section, April 15, 1939, pp. 1–6.

¹¹¹Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, op. cit., vol. V, p. 125; this "answer" was a verbatim copy of a letter from Smith to James D. Bales, November 7, 1942. Smith's arguments found in his *Doctrines of Salvation* (Bruce R. McConkie, comp., 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56]), vol. I, pp. 90–106, were also taken from a letter to Bales, October 12, 1942 (photocopies in my possession); also cf. Note 16 above. Other mid-twentieth-century commentary on Adam-God includes Milton R. Hunter's disputation of the transplantation of Adam belief (*Provo Daily Herald*, March 22, 1949) and Joseph Fielding Smith's espousal of it (*Man, His Origin and Destiny* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], pp. 276–77; his *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. I, pp. 139–40; also cf. *Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 5, pp. 170–71; Bruce R. McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958], pp. 17–18; and Alvin R. Dyer's *The Fallacy* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964], pp. 125–137).

¹¹²In correspondence with Elder Petersen, I asked if "the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have approved your book, *Adam, Who is He?*, as the official explanation of [the Adam-God] theory." Elder Petersen replied, "The book is accepted as is also the address that I gave in the [October 1980] general conference on the same subject." (D. J. Buerger to Mark E. Petersen, January 5, 1981 and Petersen to Buerger, January 7, 1981) Elder Petersen responded to another similar inquiry by stating that his book "was approved by the First Presidency and the Twelve and is published under their authority and that these brethren agree with what is in the book." (Mark E. Petersen to Melaine N. Layton, February 13, 1980; photocopy in my possession) The First Presidency has used the book in answering queries on Adam-God since its publication in 1976. (e.g., in response to H. Michael Marquardt's letter to President Spencer W. Kimball on December 3, 1976 [the letter was actually sent over the signature of Janice Willden] asking why Brigham Young's belief was currently held invalid by the church, Francis M. Gibbons, Secretary to the First Presidency, responded, on December 7, 1976 in behalf of President Kimball saying, "[We] suggest that you obtain a copy of the book, *Adam, Who is He?* by Elder Mark E. Petersen, which fully discusses the questions you raise."; photocopies of this correspondence are in my possession.)

¹¹³*Adam, Who is He?*, pp. 15–19; also cf. Hugh B. Brown to Morris L. Reynolds, May 13, 1966 (photocopy in my possession) for a similar response. Elder Petersen's mistranscription argument

was based upon a claim that Apostle Charles C. Rich heard Young's April 9, 1852 sermon and personally corrected the text to a "more accurate" rendition in his copy of the *Journal of Discourses*. After publication of *Adam, Who is He?*, however, subsequent research showed that Elder Rich was enroute from San Bernardino to Salt Lake City and could not have heard Young's sermon. The "personal" correction was actually made by Rich's son, Ben E., who was born in 1855. The actual inscription by Rich states, "as corrected above is what Prest Young said, as testified to me by my father C. C. Rich. /s/ Ben E. Rich" (LDS Archives). For a discussion of this oversight, cf. Chris Alex Vlachos, op. cit., pp. 99–100. This error was corrected in the book's 1979 edition.

¹¹⁴*Adam, Who is He?*, pp. 83–84.

¹¹⁵Discourse, reported in *CR*, October 2, 1976, p. 115. This citation has been reprinted in the church's 1980–81 Melchizedek Priesthood study guide, *Choose You This Day* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), p. 59.

¹¹⁶"The Seven Deadly Heresies," Fourteen Stake Fireside Address at Brigham Young University, June 1, 1980; transcribed from tape purchased at BYU's Media Marketing. Elder McConkie evidently was condemning claims which are still espoused by Mormon fundamentalists. Notably, the published version of his talk changed the latter sentence to read: ". . . anyone who has received the temple endowment, has no excuse whatever for being led astray by it." (Cf. *BYU Devotional Speeches of the Year, 1980* [Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1981], p. 78). A few months later in the October 1980 semi-annual church conference, Mark E. Petersen reiterated his co-apostle's sentiments: "Adam was not our God nor was he our Savior. . . . Adam was the Savior's progenitor only in the same sense in which he is the ancestor of us all. . . . Then was Adam our God, or did God become Adam? Ridiculous! Adam was neither God, nor the Only Begotten Son of God. He was a child of God in the spirit as we all are." (Discourse, reported in *CR*, October 4, 1980, pp. 22–23.