

Adam-A Mysterious Person

Last Updated
Feb 98

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The Apocalypse of Adam*

by Stephen E. Robinson**

Stephen E. Robinson, BYU Studies, Vol. 17, No. 2, p.131

In 1945 a collection of thirteen leather-bound volumes, containing fifty-three separate compositions, was discovered in the vicinity of the small town of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. Since that time this collection has generally been referred to as the Nag Hammadi Library. These manuscripts, written in Coptic, the language of Egypt during the first centuries of the Christian era, are the literary remains of a group of Egyptian Christians who practiced a form of Christianity called Gnosticism.

Summary of the Apocalypse of Adam

The Apocalypse of Adam (CG V, 5) purports to record the revelation which Adam taught to his son Seth. According to the text, Adam first explains to Seth that after being created out of the earth, he and Eve possessed in unity a great glory, that Eve taught him a word of knowledge of the Eternal God, and as a result of this they were like the great eternal angels and were higher than the evil Creator God who made them. It is then told how the Creator God divided them into two aeons,¹³ apparently an allusion to the myth of the androgynous creation of Adam. Thus separated, their original glory and first leave them and enter into their seed to be manifest in future generations through the lineage of Seth. Seth himself is named after the great Savior figure who will be the manifestation of the lost knowledge and glory of Adam and Eve in some future generation. Adam and Eve, having lost their original glory and knowledge in the fall, now learn as men about dead things. They also now recognize the evil Creator God, who is roughly equivalent in Gnosticism to the Satan of Christianity. Adam then falls into a sleep during which three men come to him whom he does not recognize, because they are not from the Creator God, but presumably from the Great Eternal God. Saying "Adam, arise from the sleep of death . . ." they restore some of Adam's knowledge and tell him about the Savior/Illuminator who will eventually be born from his and Eve's seed. When Adam and Eve hear these things they give a sigh in their hearts which is overheard by the evil Creator God. He then appears before them and insists that he is their god, the god who made them. He somehow causes Adam to lust after Eve (the text is broken here) and there is a second fall. Adam now reveals to Seth the things that the three men taught him, which consist of a vision of the future and of the appearance of the Savior/Illuminator. Adam prophesies that the Creator God will bring the Flood upon the world and destroy all men in order to kill the seed of Seth into whom the original knowledge and glory of Adam have entered. But angels from the Great Eternal God come on clouds and, plucking the seed of Seth from the flood, transport them to the place of the spirit of life. The Creator God has in the meantime made a covenant with Noah and his sons,¹⁴ promising to save them and give them kingship over all the earth if they will bear no seed of those who will not worship him. When the seed of Seth reappears, Noah is accused by the Creator God of breaking this covenant, which Noah denies. The seed of Seth then go into a land by themselves and establish a utopian community where there is no evil for 600 years, where angels of the Great Eternal God dwell with them, and where they are called by "the Name." Noah then divides the earth among his sons and charges his posterity to serve the Creator God in fear and slavery. But from the seed of Ham and Japheth 400,000 men join themselves with the seed of Seth. The remainder of the seed of Ham and Japheth form twelve kingdoms and serve their god Sakla, the Creator God. Inevitably friction arises between the twelve kingdoms on the one hand and the seed of Seth with their

400,000 converts on the other. To vindicate his power in the eyes of the twelve kingdoms the Creator God sends some of his angels to rain fire, sulphur, and asphalt upon the seed of Seth. But again, the Great Eternal God sends his angels Abrasax, Sablo, and Gamaliel in clouds of light to descend upon the seed of Seth, lift them out of the fire, and take them away. Some time after this the Illuminator of knowledge himself appears in order to leave for himself fruit-bearing trees (i.e., men who have thegnosis) and to redeem their souls from death. This is the Savior promised to Adam and Eve. He performs great signs and wonders and mocks the powers of the Creator God. Because the origin and power of the Illuminator is something that the Creator God and his angels cannot explain, they "punish his flesh." Nevertheless, they use "the Name" in error, and ask, "Where did it come from?" In answer to this question the twelve kingdoms of Ham and Japheth attempt to explain in short enigmatic statements how he was conceived, born, nourished and thus "came to the water." These statements follow the pattern of the first which is, in part: He was from . . . a spirit . . . to heaven. He was nourished in the heavens. He received the glory and the power of the one who is there. He came to the bosom or womb of his mother. And thus he came to the water. After the twelve kingdoms, a thirteenth adds its account. Then finally the fourteenth, the generation without a king, gives the correct answer which is God chose him from all the aeons. He caused a gnosis of the undefiled one of truth to be in him. She said: "He came from a foreign atmosphere (aer). From a great aeon the great Illuminator came forth. He makes the generation of those men whom he has chosen for himself to shine, so that they shine upon the whole aeon." A great conflict follows between the seed of Seth, here referred to as "those who will receive his name upon the water" and the thirteen kingdoms. Finally the peoples cry out that the seed of Seth is truly blessed and that they themselves are in error, that they have perverted the truth and will die as a result. In answer to this mass confession of the kingdoms, a voice is heard (a bath kol) addressed to the three aeons Micheu, Michar, and Mnesinous, who are over the holy baptism, condemning them for persecuting the seed of Seth, for fighting against the truth, and for polluting the waters of life in order to serve the Creator God. The voice then praises the seed of Seth (Gnostics) and assures them of their reward which they have earned by keeping the words they received and by not writing them down. The voice further declares that the truth will be borne through the generations by angelic beings and that the words of truth will be upon a high mountain upon a rock of truth and that those who know the Great Eternal God know all things.

In the conclusion of the document, which follows the proclamation of the heavenly voice, we are told that Seth passed these revelations on to his posterity. We are further informed that the secret gnosis is the holy baptism which is administered by the seed of Seth. Appended are the three names Jesseus, Mazareus, and Jessedekeus.

The planets stand there,
they are bound by fetters and say:
*When Adam fled from us
out watch-houses were destroyed.
When Adam rose from us,
our radiance was soon taken away.
He rose up and ascended to the House of Life;
they, the uthras, washed him in the Jordan and protected him.
They washed him and protected him in the Jordan ;
they placed their right hand on him.
They baptized him with their baptism
and strengtened him with their pure words.*

Adam Placed on The Earth

Mandaean Writings: (the Mandaeans of Southern Mesopotamia)

GINZA:

"Go down to that place where there is no occupied place, where there is no world, and create for us another world after the fashion of the Sons of Salvation ...

God started out by creating a topos where His children could settle, there to recognize and to serve Him as their Father...

Adam., this is the place where you are going to live; your wife Eve will come and Join you here, and here your progeny will thrive...

The Father taught me about the worlds of the Lord and the Glory that abides in them. The Adam of light treads upon the earth's trembling foundation which is laid in the midst of the worlds...

There is no rivalry or competition among them, but they are glorious in their firmaments, and there is agreement among them, fitting together like the lashes to the eye. All rejoice in each other, each being more glorious and bright than the other...

'No words can describe Thy power over all Thy worlds...'

When beings from different worlds meet, they exchange garments and treasures an identification a sign of mutual esteem. For the creation of endless worlds follows a single pattern -- that laid down by God the creator. The planet say, 'Come Lord of the gods, Lord of the entire cosmos.' (They rejoice and say) 'Come be our head, be the head of our whole world'..

"In the million of worlds that God has made for his sons every world is different from the other and wonderful in its own radiance.

Among ten thousand times ten thousand world you will find no two alike. Before this world, there had already been a thousand thousand mysteries and a myriad myriad of planets each with their own mysteries or ordinances.

He who has fulfilled all the ordinances and has done good work cannot be held back. We are taught the principles of salvation, so that we cannot be held back in this world...

When Adam stood praying for light and knowledge, a helper came to him and gave to him a garment and told him, 'Those men who gave you the garment will assist you throughout your life until you are ready to leave earth'..

When Adam was created, he was found in a deep sleep, from which he was awakened by the helper who forthwith began to instruct him. And at his death also, the Sent Ones came to take Adam back to the great first Paternal House and to the places in which he formerly dwelt.

Second-- when Adam awoke, he faced the light and called for help. The Lord Himself approached him, in glory, and took him by the palm of the right hand instructed him and calmed him and Then he comforted Eve. 'In this way, I have brought joy and aid to his descendants.' The Sent Ones came to bring hope to Adam, who was in, the image of God...

At the creation, God gave orders that the angels should come to keep Adam company. At the beginning, it was the Lord Himself and two companions who instructed Adam and Eve in everything.

'Go down into the world, Adam, and grow up in the body, in that garment which has been assigned to you. Go down and grow up in the ordinances, that the ordinances may be magnified by you, that your progeny may thereby be firmly established. The Man that taught the elect righteous and the Nazoreans, who were to exist upon the earth in the preexistence, said, 'When you beget generations, and when you teach them their knowledge, explain to them, show them, and tell them about the rites which you have performed.' The wholesome things were transplanted

from the world above"

The evil spirits, who claim this world for their own, resent the Sent One's instruction. 'These three men are in the world,' they say, 'but they were not really men. They are light and glory, and they have come down to little 'Enosh' [that's physical man -- Adam] who is helpless and alone in the world. They are intruding on our world. The children of men have taken over the earth. They are really strangers who speak the language of the three men. They have accepted the teachings of the three men, and rejected In our own world. They refuse to acknowledge our kingdom and our glory '

Thus, the evil ones plotted to overthrow Adam, who was hoping for Mandadihaya (Teacher of Life), the messenger from the Father, to come-and give him aid and support.

When; Adam called upon God, the Great Spirit sent them from the land...

The Lord and two companions taught Adam and Eve all the ordinances and blessed them. 'The Great Light planted us here and gave us helpers who taught us the prayer of Adam in the world.' Three angels were sent to teach Adam and Eve the law of chastity, and to instruct them to be true and faithful when misfortune came upon them, and to dedicate all of their property to the needy and the poor -- the rule which is binding upon all the elect. They were to call upon God without ceasing, in the name of the Son, and not to trust in the things of this world. "

Messengers sent to Adam

Prayerbook of the Mandaean

"When Adam was placed on earth, three messengers were sent to oversee him with myself at their head... I taught Adam and Eve the hymns, and the order of prayer, and the ordinances by which would now help one to return to the presence of the Father." In sending three, God says to them, giving them instructions. He said to the pure sent one, His Son, 'Go call Adam and Eve and all their posterity and teach them concerning everything about the Kingdom of Light and the Worlds of Light. Be friendly with Adam and keep him company, you and the two angels which will be with you. Warn them against Satan; also, teach them chastity'.

The helper came and awakened the Lord of Mysteries, who is Adam. For Adam went through all the ordinances, including baptism, washings' and anointings,"

From The Berlin Papyrus 8502

"The first man was the third of the Sent Ones-- the Father, the Son, and Adam...As he left Heaven to come down and undergo his earthly trials, Adam received affectionate farewell embraces from all his faithful children. He put on his physical body and went forth to oppose the primal enemy. Before the creation of this world, the third Sent One (as Adam is called) came into the free space and began to organize this world. "This third Sent One was Christ's great coworker in the Plan of Salvation, but in all things he has precedence....

At their new birth Adam and Eve received the seals and the tokens. As Adam stood praying and supplicating, God sent someone who came. and gave him a greeting of peace (shalom), embraced him, and preached the Gospel to him"

From The Apocryphon of John

"After the physical Adam' was created, a messenger was sent to the head Of all creations, Adam, and at his call Adam awoke and said, 'How the precious, beautiful life has been planted in this place. But it is hard on me; down here.' Then the Sent One reminded Adam and said, 'But your beautiful throne awaits you, Adam. Why then do you, the image of God, sit here complaining? All this is being done for your good. I have been sent to teach you, Adam, and to free you from this world. Listen and return to the light.' Hither a messenger from the house of light was sent to fetch Adam farther when he was ready."

In the name of the Great Life
the sublime Light be glorified.
From the Place of Light I have come forth,
from you, everlasting dwelling-place,
From the Place of Light I have come forth,
and an uthra from the House of Life accompanied me.
The uthraa who accompanied me from the House of the Great Life
held a staff of living water in his hand.
The staff which he held in his hand
was completely full of leaves.
He gave me its branches,
of which the ritual books and prayers were full.
Then he gave me more of them,
and then my suffering heart was healed.

My suffering heart was healed
and my world-shy soul found peace.

Satan Appears To Adam

"And Satan said to Adam, 'I have no need to worship you, I will not worship an inferior being and younger being. I was your senior in the creation. Before you were made I was already made. It is rather your duty to worship me. The angels who are under me refuse to worship You also... Adam I was cast forth from my Glory because of thee, and behold I have caused thee to be expelled from the Garden Paradise because thou didst cause me to become a Stranger in my home in heaven Know thou that I shall never cease to contend against thee and all those who shall come after thee until all go down into my kingdom with me' "

Combat of Adam and Eve 14, 15

In his book The Millennial Messiah, Bruce R. McConkie gives an excellent opening regarding the mystery of Adam-ondi-Ahman:

We now come to the least known and least understood thing connected with the Second Coming. It might well be termed the best-kept secret set forth in the revealed word. It is something about which the world knows nothing; it is a doctrine that has scarcely dawned on most of the Latter-day Saints themselves; and yet it is set forth in holy writ and in the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith with substantially the same clarity as any of the doctrines of the kingdom. Bruce R. McConkie, The Millennial Messiah, pp. 578-579.

In conferring the "keys of salvation" upon Adam, the revealing and unlocking of the conditions of salvation were made known to them and through them to mankind. In this we can understand the true meaning of the term "Adam-ondi-Ahman," or simply: from "Ahman," who is the Lord-"ondi," meaning through Adam unto mankind. Alvin R. Dyer, Conference Report, October 1968, p. 109.

More specifically, Alvin R. Dyer has stated:

The very word itself speaks of the manner in which Adam has received the "Keys of Salvation" under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is Jesus Christ the Lord. The word "Adam" refers directly to Adam. The word "ondi," means nearby or connected with. The word "Ahman" means the Lord himself. Therefore a literal translation of the words "Adam-ondi-Ahman" means The Lord Jesus Christ, through Adam unto mankind. Robert J. Matthews, B.Y.U. Studies, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 30 (quoting Alvin R. Dyer, The Lord Speaketh (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. 1964), p. 216.)

Adam

As taught by Prophet Joseph Smith, "the Garden of Eden was on the American continent located where the City Zion, or the New Jerusalem, will be built." Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 3, p. 74. After Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden, they eventually dwelt at a place called Adam-ondi-Ahman. Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 3, p. 74. However, while "The Lord has revealed to us that Adam dwelt there towards the latter period of his probation, ... "Whether he had lived in that region of country from the earliest period of his existence on the earth, we know not. Journal of Discourses, Vol. 16, p. 47, Orson Pratt, May 18, 1873.

The foundation of Adam-ondi-Ahman was established by Jesus Christ. D&C 78:15 ("That you may come up unto the crown prepared for you, and be made rulers over many kingdoms saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Zion, who hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman"); History of the Church, Vol. 1, Ch. 18, p. 256; Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 1, p. 99. Prophet Wilford Woodruff taught Adam "went to Adam-ondi-Ahman to offer sacrifice." The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, p. 18. Upon offering the sacrifice, an angel of the Lord asked him why he did so. Adam replied that he did not know, but the Lord had commanded him to do it. He was then told that the blood of bulls and goats, of rams and lambs should be spilt upon the altar as a type of the great and last sacrifice which should be offered up for the sins of the world. The first principle, then, ever taught to Father Adam was faith in the Messiah, who was to come in the meridian of time to lay down his life for the redemption of man. Journal

of Discourses, Vol. 23, p. 127, Wilford Woodruff, May 14, 1882; The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, p. 18.

Adam built an altar on "a hill above the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman" Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 2, p. 232. or "plateau near Adam-ondi-Ahman [comprised of] a number of rocks piled together [where Adam] offered up sacrifices." John Taylor, The Gospel Kingdom, p. 102 (repeating statements made by Joseph Smith). At that place, "the Lord revealed to [Adam] the purpose of the fall and the mission of the Savior." Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 2, p. 232 (referencing D&C 107:53-57, 116, 117:8, 11; Moses 5:5-8; Joseph Fielding Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 122, 158. Adam-ondi-Ahman became "the land where Adam dwelt" D&C 117:8 ("Is there not room enough upon the mountains of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and on the plains of Olaha Shinehah, or the land where Adam dwelt, that you should covet that which is but the drop, and neglect the more weighty matters?") and "the valley where God talked with Adam." John Taylor, The Gospel Kingdom, p. 102 (repeating statements made by Joseph Smith).

Adam-ondi-Ahman is where "the family of mortals had its beginning. It was there that mortal man learned to work by the sweat of his brow. It was there that the first mortal children were born to the first mortal parents. Mortal man first learned to communicate with his God in those valleys." Otten & Caldwell, Sacred Truths of the Doctrine & Covenants, Vol. 2, pp. 278-279. Adam-ondi-Ahman was also "the site of the first death and murder on this earth. The blessings of the Savior's atonement took on added significance there, for the members of Adam's family. The first family relationships and associations were developed. In short, this area was truly a place of beginnings." Otten & Caldwell, Sacred Truths of the Doctrine & Covenants, Vol. 2, p. 279.

Three years prior to Adam's death, 3077 B.C. Bruce R. McConkie, The Promised Messiah, p. 606:

According to the Biblical chronology, Adam fell in 4004 B.C. and died 930 years later, in 3074 B.C. By latter-day revelation we know that the meeting at Adam-ondi-Ahman, which was attended by all of his righteous posterity and to which the Lord himself came, was three years previous to Adam's death, that is, in 3077 B.C. (D&C 107:53-56.), he called the sons of his lineage (in order: Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah) with the "residue of his posterity who were righteous ... into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing. D&C 107:53-57:

53. Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all High Priests, with the residue of his posterity, who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing.

54. And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael the Prince, the Archangel.

55. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him, I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee; and thou art a prince over them for ever.

56. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation, and notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation.

57. These things were all written in the Book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time.

see also Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section One 1830-34 p. 38; John Taylor, Mediation and Atonement, Ch. 8. Joseph Smith described this incident:

I saw Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. He called together his children and blessed them with a patriarchal blessing. The Lord appeared in their midst, and he (Adam) blessed them all, and foretold what should befall them to the latest generation. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Four 1839-42 p. 158.

Elder John Taylor also described these events:

Adam, before he left the earth, gathered his people together in the Valley of Adam-ondi-ah-man, and the curtain of eternity was unfolded before him, and he gazed upon all events pertaining to his descendants, which should transpire in every subsequent period of time, and he prophesied to them. He saw the flood and its desolating influence; he saw the introduction again of a people in the days of Noah; he saw their departure from the right path. He saw Abraham, Moses and the Prophets make their appearance and witnessed the results of their acts; he saw nations rise and fall;

he saw the time when Jesus would come and restore the Gospel and when he would preach that Gospel to those who perished in the days of Noah; and in fact he saw everything that should transpire upon the earth, until the winding up scene. He was acquainted with the day in which we live and the circumstances with which we are surrounded. Otten & Caldwell, Sacred Truths of the Doctrine & Covenants, Vol. 2, p. 279 (citing Bruce R. McConkie, Gospel Doctrine, Vol. 17, p. 372).

President Wilford Woodruff described this blessing as Adam's "great and last patriarchal blessing" The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, pp. 65-66. and explained that the "Holy Ghost rested upon Adam when he blessed his posterity in Adam-ondi-Ahman." The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, pp. 4-5; The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star (Liverpool) 48:802, Epistle to the Saints Abroad, October 26, 1886. Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., explained further that "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." Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 3, p. 163 (citing D&C 107:53-55). Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., explained that "Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation -- and no such a gathering on any other occasion has this world ever seen -- 'and notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost (he) predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the last generation.' And all this is written in the book of Enoch, which shall be revealed in due time." Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., The Way to Perfection, pp. 288-289 (quoting D.C. 107:54-57); Bruce R. McConkie, The Millennial Messiah, pp.579-580. As Elder Orson Pratt has said, "When we get [the Book of Enoch], I think we shall know a great deal about the ante-diluvians of whom at present we know so little." Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol. 2, "Enoch" (citing Journal of Discourses, Vol. 19, p. 218).) However, "All that happened at Adam-ondi-Ahman in those early days was but a type and a shadow -- a similitude, if you will -- of what shall happen at the same blessed place in the last days when Adam and Christ and the residue of men who are righteous assemble again in solemn worship." Bruce R. McConkie, The Millennial Messiah, p. 580.

President John Taylor reported the following song sang by the Saints about Adam-ondi-Ahman:

This earth was once a garden place, With all her glories common, And men did live a holy race, And worship Jesus face to face, In Adam-ondi-Ahman. We read that Enoch walk'd with God, Above the power of mammon, While Zion spread herself abroad, And Saints and angels sung aloud, In Adam-ondi-Ahman. Her land was good and greatly blest, Beyond old Israel's Canaan; Her fame was known from east to west, Her peace was great, and pure the rest Of Adam-ondi-Ahman. Hosannah to such days to come -- The Savior's second coming, When all the earth in glorious bloom, Affords the Saints a holy home, Like Adam-ondi-Ahman. John Taylor, Mediation and Atonement, Ch. 8.

Van Hale's "WHAT ABOUT THE ADAM-GOD THEORY?"

Sandy, Utah: Mormon Miscellaneous, July 1983.

At the age of twenty, as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I first came in contact with the so-called Adam-God theory in an anti-Mormon tract. I had read such literature before and knew that it frequently twisted and misinterpreted LDS sources. I therefore felt certain that the purported quotation from Brigham Young's April 9, 1852 discourse - that Adam is our father and our God - either was taken from context or was an outright fabrication. After examining the evidence, however, I soon became convinced that on at least two occasions Brigham Young had taught a concept which generally has not been accepted by Mormons - namely, that God the Father, the Father of our spirits and the Father of Jesus (of both his body and his spirit), came to this earth, took upon himself mortality, and was known as Adam, the progenitor of the human family. Simply stated, according to President Young, God the Father became Adam. (Journal of Discourses [JD] 1:50; Deseret News, June 18, 1873). Later I found several other references in which President Young hinted at this belief. (JD 4:216-218, 271; 5:331; 6:274; 7:290; 11:41,42). Over the past fifteen years I have found many additional sources which confirm that this idea was taught for a period of time in the past century. They include sermon reports, private diary entries,

minutes of meetings, letters, articles, and statements. Many of these are unpublished and have only come to light in the last several years. I have encountered strong and varied opinions on this subject. Opponents of Mormonism have taken a particular interest in it. Two positions are most prevalent: (1) Non-Mormon Christians committed to evangelizing Mormons seek to establish that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God theory, that it is contrary to Biblical teaching, and that Brigham Young could therefore not have been a true prophet. (2) So-called fundamentalist Mormons seek to establish that Brigham Young taught it, that recent prophets have rejected it, and that some prophets since Brigham Young could therefore not be true prophets. Both groups have taken advantage of two facts: First, most Mormons are unaware that Brigham Young ever taught the Adam-God theory; and second, most Mormons are uncomfortable with the position that prophets may have differed in their concept of God. My purpose here is not to present evidence to show that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God theory. Rather, as one who is convinced that he did teach it, I wish to state briefly some of my reasons for rejecting the conclusions of these two groups of Mormonism's opponents. The non-Mormon Christian Argument I am not persuaded by the non-Mormon Christian argument for several reasons, two of which I will discuss. First, in their zeal to refute Mormonism they have misstated, ignored, or distorted many points of Mormon history. Second, and perhaps more important, they demand qualifications of a prophet which are both un-Biblical and unreasonable. I will present my response by answering two questions. Was the Adam-God theory official Mormon doctrine? My answer to this question is an emphatic "No." After presenting evidence that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God theory, critics usually go on to claim: that it was official doctrine for 50 years; that it was widely taught and received; that Brigham Young claimed he had received it by revelation; that it was accepted as the inerrant word of God because Brigham Young said his sermons were scripture; and that those rejecting it were excommunicated from the church. The effort of opponents to establish this point is evidence that they consider it important. Their purpose is to make Mormons feel uncomfortable with Mormonism. To present the Adam-God theory as a concept expressed by Brigham Young on several occasions but which was never accepted officially as doctrine does not serve their purpose nearly as well. They therefore resort to considerable distortion to maintain this erroneous position. My reasons for rejecting this anti-Mormon caricature are based on the following six points.

1. The Adam-God theory has never been a part of the Mormon canon of scripture. The Church has always had an official canon. During Brigham's Young's lifetime it was the Bible, Book of Mormon, and a somewhat smaller Doctrine and Covenants. President Young never attempted to incorporate any statement of the Adam-God theory into this canon. Opponents frequently quote Brigham Young's statement that he had "never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call Scripture" (JD 13:95), or that his sermons "when they are copied and approved by [him] they are as good Scripture as is couched in this Bible," (JD 13:264). They contend that President Young in calling his sermons scripture and comparing them to the Bible was declaring his to be the inerrant word of God, but this is their definition of scripture and not Brigham Young's. His definition of scripture and thus the only one appropriately applied here did not define scripture as being word for word the word of God. Rather, he said: "I have heard some make the broad assertion that every word within the lids of the Bible was the word of God ... I believe that the Bible contains the word of God, and the words of good angels and the words of bad angels and the words of the devil; and also the words uttered by the ass when he rebuked the prophet in his madness. I believe the words of the Bible are just what they are."

(JD 13:175,235).

Brigham Young did not claim inerrancy for his sermons. In fact quite the contrary is true, as will be seen.

2. The theory was never advocated in any official statement. In addition to the canon, official statements were occasionally issued by the First Presidency and by the Quorum of the Twelve. The only one in which Brigham Young ever referred to the Adam-God theory was a statement issued in 1860 entitled "Instructions to the Saints." Signed by the First Presidency and published in the Deseret News, it stated several conclusions of councils held to consider some doctrinal differences between Apostle Orson Pratt and President Young. One of these was the Adam-God theory. But rather than declaring the theory to be Church doctrine, the statement says, "It is deemed wisest to let that subject remain without further explanation at present" (Messages of the First Presidency 2:222).

3. No revelation was ever presented by Brigham Young on the Adam-God theory. Nor does it appear that he ever claimed to have received a direct revelation on the subject. Opponents would challenge my claim with this quotation from President Young: "How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints

in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed to me - namely that Adam is our father and God."

(Deseret News, June 18, 1873).

It is not all certain that Brigham Young intended this to be an announcement of a direct revelation. It was his belief that God is the source of all truth in every field. To him, every truth known to any man has come by revelation from God, sometimes directly but usually indirectly upon such natural principles as observation, study, inquiry, and meditation. Since he believed that the Adam- God theory was true, no matter how he arrived at that conclusion, to him it was revealed by God. (He presented this thought at some length in JD 3:209; see also 12:207; 12:148).

But even if this is to be accepted as a claim of direct revelation, the extent of it seems to be "namely that Adam is our father and God." The more specific idea that God the Father became Adam may be Brigham Young's own expansion or interpretation. There is, however, another possible interpretation - that, as the Lord made Moses a god to Pharaoh(Exodus 7:1) and as Paul was "as Christ Jesus" to the Galatians (4:14), Adam, our great progenitor, will preside over the human family as "father and God." This was the interpretation of Brigham Young's statement advocated in 1853 by Samuel W. Richards, who, as editor of the Millennial Star and President of the Church in the British Isles, first published President Young's initial sermon on the subject (Millennial Star, December 10, 1853). Richards' successor, Apostle Franklin D. Richards, also advanced this interpretation (MS, March 31, 1855), as have most of Brigham Young's successors. The fact remains that there is no revelation from Brigham Young specifically stating the idea that God the Father became Adam.

4. Brigham Young himself did not consider the Adam-God theory official Church doctrine. Again opponents would challenge my assertion by quoting the bold language he used in his first mention of the subject : "Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner!" and "Every man upon the earth, professing Christian or non-professing, must know it sooner or later." From this they insist that President Young considered the Adam-God theory official Church doctrine. However, he expressed his attitude toward it on several other occasions making it very clear that he considered belief in the subject non-essential. Opponents, to maintain their argument, chose to ignore these quotations:

"[The] subject ... does not immediately concern yours or my welfare... I do not pretend to say that the items of doctrine and ideas I shall advance are necessary for the people to know."(October 8, 1854, Historical Department of the Church [HDC]).

"... it is one that should not trouble us at all ... I do not tell it because that I wish it to be established in the minds of others."

(April 25, 1855, HDC).

"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 of 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. (JD 4:217; see also JD4:271; 7:238; 7:285; 11:43, 268).

I cannot believe that President Young would speak this way of an official Church doctrine. Opponents give the impression that for many years President Young frequently and forcefully advocated the Adam-God theory, but this is another distortion. I have not found a single sermon devoted to a full exposition of the theory. Rather, it must be pieced together from several of his sermons and comments. Also, he delivered some 1500 sermons as President, and not more than half a dozen, only two of which appeared in print, contain explicit statements of central Adam-God theory concepts.

5. The Adam-God theory was not considered Church doctrine by other General Authorities. Tens of thousands of hours of sermons by some twenty leading authorities of Brigham Young's era have been recorded and preserved. Yet we have only several brief comments on the subject by only one of them - Brigham Young's counselor Heber C. Kimball, and these can be read in less than two minutes. The same is true of their writings. Of thousands of printed pages by these authorities there are less than a dozen on the subject, and most of these argue that Adam, as patriarch, will be our God in a certain sense, not that God the Father became Adam. At least a hundred other topics were more frequently addressed in sermons and in print.

6. The Adam-God theory was not a test of faith. That is, acceptance of it was not required to become a member or to remain a member. Opponents frequently claim that it was Church practice to excommunicate those who did not accept it. This is simply false. The only reference they present in support of their claim is from a conference talk in Great Britain by Apostle Amasa Lyman. However, this very reference, if read in its entirety refutes their argument. Lyman said, "I have heard of a man who was cut off because he would not believe that Adam was our Father and God." They stop here, but Elder Lyman did not. He continued, disapproving strongly of excommunicating a man on those grounds (MS 24:99, 100).

Those familiar with LDS history and practice are well aware that official doctrine must meet certain requirements which were not met by the Adam-God theory. The fact is it was never a part of the LDS canon, never presented in an official statement, never the subject of any known revelation, and never declared church doctrine by any recognized Church authority. The status of the Adam-God theory was summed up in 1897 in a private letter outlined by President Wilford Woodruff and written by Apostle Joseph F. Smith. Both had been Apostles under Brigham Young:

"Prest. Young no doubt expressed his personal opinion or views upon the subject. What he said was not given as revelation or commandment from the Lord. The doctrine was never submitted to the councils of the Priesthood nor to the church for approval or ratification, and was never formally or otherwise accepted by the church. It is therefore in no sense binding upon the Church. Brigham Young's "bare mention" was "without indubitable evidence and authority being given of its truth." Only the scripture, the "accepted word of God," is the Church's standard (Letter to A. Saxey,

January 7, 1897, HDC).

It seems appropriate at this point to state briefly what has been the prevailing LDS belief. The idea most readily found in the LDS scriptures, the teaching of all of Brigham Young's successors is that Adam and all of the human family have a common Father and God, who is the Father of Jesus Christ. In fact, this very concept was stated in public sermons on several occasions by Brigham Young himself. An example is found in his April 17, 1870 sermon:

"The world may in vain ask the question: "Who are we?" But the Gospel tells us that we are the sons and daughters of that God who we serve. Some say, "We are the children of Adam and Eve." So we are, and they are the children of our Heavenly Father. We are all the children of Adam and Eve, and they and we are the offspring of Him who dwells in the heavens, the highest Intelligence that dwells anywhere that we have any knowledge of." (JD 13:311. See also JD 1:238; 10:231; 13:309).

So, with the exception of several sermons that fell far short of official pronouncements, Mormon belief has been consistent in stating that the Father and God of Moses, Jesus, Joseph Smith, Spencer W. Kimball, and all the rest of mankind is the same being who is the Father and God of Adam. Although never official doctrine, some still wonder how President Young could have held such views. This leads to the next question. Can Prophets Differ in Their Views?

As one who believes that God has called prophets at various times, I think that the only possible answer to this question is "Yes." Most opponents who have made an issue of the Adam-God theory insist that true prophets have been infallible, at least in matters of faith and doctrine, and therefore there could be no doctrinal difference or disharmony among them. They demand that LDS prophets either meet this standard or be denounced as false prophets. They assume that Biblical prophets were in such perfect union with God as to be free from all error and personal opinion and that their every word and thought were not their own, but God's. This claim has much appeal, but many devoted Christians who have examined this point have declared that the Bible in no way support this assumption. Commentators who have studied the Bible in chronological order have found numerous differences when comparing earlier writings to later, and when comparing author to author. This basic idea has been widely discussed and abundantly demonstrated in such major Biblical works as the Interpreter's Bible, and the Interpreter's Bible Dictionary.

Several subjects on which the authors of the Bible diverge include: the nature of God, Jesus, and the Messiah; salvation, resurrection, the second coming, and the observance of the law of Moses. Our opponents must be able to deny the differences demonstrated by Bible scholars on these several important points and show a perfect agreement among Bible authors before I could see any validity in their demanding perfect consistency among LDS prophets.

Non-Mormon Christians who acknowledge these differences within the Bible have not felt obligated to reject the Biblical prophets because of their differences. Rather, they have proposed what they feel are valid explanations of them. As far as I am concerned, the same explanations apply with equal validity to LDS prophets. The two primary points of their explanations are: a) Prophets are not infallible, and b) Their knowledge was fragmentary and incomplete. Rev. J.R. Dummelow, in his widely received work stated:

"We must not regard the Bible as an absolutely perfect book in which God is Himself the author using human hands and brains only as a man might use a typewriter. God used men, not machines - men with like weakness and prejudice and passion as ourselves ... in the Bible we do not expect the actors to be real and natural. Because of our false theory of Verbal Inspiration we are puzzled when the divine is mingled with the human. We must learn that the divine is mingled with the human ... It is a mine of precious ore where the gold is mingled with the rock and clay - the ore is richer in one part than another, but all parts in some degree are glittering with gold (p. cxxxv). The Apostle Paul said that that "which is perfect" would come in the future. For the present, he claimed that he only "knew in part and prophesied in part." He compared his present imperfect knowledge to the distorted, imperfect image reflected in the poor grade of mirrors of his

day. He did not consider his knowledge either complete or perfect. The renowned New Testament interpreter William Barclay has commented on this passage from 1 Corinthians 13:9-12:

The Corinthian mirror was made of highly polished metal and, even at its best, gave but an imperfect reflection ... In this life Paul feels we see only the reflections of God and are left with much that is mystery and riddle ... Even if in Christ we have the perfect revelation, our seeking minds can grasp it only in part, for the finite can never grasp the infinite. Our knowledge is still like the knowledge of a child, But the way of love will lead us in the end to the day when the veil is drawn aside and we see face to face and know even as we are known. (The Letters to the Corinthians, p. 125).

I believe that the only reasonable position is that the Biblical prophets were a mixture of the divine and the human. They received revelation progressively. God revealed Himself to them "line upon line." The prophets increased in their knowledge and understanding, as did those who followed. The result is that in different ages different prophets have held some different views. Even the same prophet grew in insight and understanding. >From their writings and sermons it seems to me that both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young would have concurred with these conclusions of recent Bible commentators. Both maintained that God had not perfectly nor fully revealed Himself to past prophets nor to themselves. There were, like Paul, looking to the future for God's perfect revelation of Himself and for their own perfect understanding of His revelations. Neither one claimed to be infallible, but rather frequently admitted to his own imperfections (D&C 42:61; 50:24, 40; 78:18; 88:49; 121:28; 124:41; 128:18; JD 2:314; 1:115). Brigham Young once stated as his opinion that: " even the best of the Latter-day Saints have but a faint idea of the attributes of the Deity.

Were the former and Latter-day Saints, with their Apostles, Prophets, Seers, and Revelator collected together to discuss this matter, I am led to think there would be found a great variety in their views and feelings upon this subject, without direct revelation from the Lord. It is as much my right to differ from other men, as it is theirs to differ from me, in points of doctrine and principle, when our minds cannot at once arrive at the same conclusion." (JD 2:123).

Many non-Mormon Christians, while admitting that differences exist in the prophetic writings, are not willing to reject the prophets. Neither am I. I am not willing to discard Paul's claims because some of his imperfections and lack of harmony with other prophets and apostles have been pointed out. Neither am I willing to discard Mormonism because opponents can point to a difference between Brigham Young and a Bible prophet, or between him and a succeeding LDS prophet.

I believe those who insist that prophets must be infallible are either uninformed or unreasonable. Either they will find themselves disappointed, or will find themselves constantly refusing an objective examination of the subject. I think it only fair that opponents of Mormonism either relinquish this point, or be prepared to refute the massive evidence of prophetic differences and variations presented by objective Christian Bible scholars.

It is common for Mormons who have examined the Adam-God issue to reject this concept of Brigham Young but not reject him as a prophet believing that both the Bible and Mormon history have revealed that all who have been prophets were yet fallible and susceptible to error. When the evidence against the infallibility of prophets is acknowledged, I believe this position is reasonable. However, there is something more which needs to be said. I also know some Mormons who believe the Adam-God theory is true, and others who, after considerable exposure, have not yet formed an opinion. In order to understand these other two positions two additional points need attention. In their zeal to portray Mormonism as negatively as possible it is very common for opponents to charge that the Adam-God theory is absurd and blasphemous, but this greatly exaggerates the issue. This is a charge made in the spirit of ridicule rather than reasoned examination. The claim is frequently made that Brigham Young believed in a different God, that he did not believe in the God of the Bible. However, in his sermons, when he spoke of God, he clearly had reference to the God of the Bible, the Being who: formed the earth (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 117, 352), made promises to Abraham (p. 342), delivered the children of Israel from Egypt (p. 342), gave the Law to Moses (p. 104, 348), and is the Father of Christ (p. 26, 119). He did not believe in a different God. He believe that the God of the Bible, He who performed these and many other acts described therein, also came to this earth as Adam. If in error on this point, his error was in believing God performed an act which He did not perform. The point of difference is not who is God, but rather what has God done. I have frequently heard our opponents respond to the claim that God the Father experienced mortality by crying absurd, or blasphemous. However, they believe, as do Mormons, that: the "man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5), who "grew and waxed strong" (Luke 2:40), "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52), "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb 5:8), "was in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb 4:15), who experienced birth, pain, joy, sorrow, anger, and death. that this man was in fact God the Son passing through mortality. By comparison, Brigham Young believed that:

God the Father took upon Himself mortality to begin the human race. God the Son took upon Himself mortality to redeem the human race. I can understand how someone who believes the second statement could disbelieve the first one, but I am surprised that those who believe the second one do not hesitate to declare the first one absurd and blasphemous. Why is it any more absurd or blasphemous to believe that God the Father experienced mortality than it is to believe that God the Son did? I suppose that ultimately whatever is false is also absurd. My point is that until the ultimate truth is revealed what seems absurd or blasphemous is usually that which contradicts a cherished religious tradition. For 2000 years many Jews, upon their understanding of the Old Testament, have condemned the Christian view of Jesus as absurd and blasphemous. I see this approach as an appeal to tradition, not as a worthwhile argument. The primary argument of those who do not accept the Adam-God theory is that it is not scriptural. I concur with this. I do not believe that it can be supported from the Bible. To me the Biblical message is that Adam's God is our God; his Father is our Father (Genesis, and Luke 3:38). This also seems to be the message of LDS scripture (Moses 2-5, and D&C 78:15-22). However, it does not necessarily prove that an idea is false to show that it is not supported by previous scripture, or even that it apparently contradicts previous scripture. If otherwise, then those who rejected the New Testament message were justified. Many rejected Jesus because he came with not only a new message, but sometimes a different message. Several times in the sermon on the mount Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said ...But I say unto you ..." (Matthew 5, see also 19:3-12). The Old Testament had one message, but Jesus had another. In Acts 15, when Peter, by authority of the Holy Spirit, announced that circumcision would no longer be required of God's people, he announced a different message than that of the Old Testament, which spoke of it as an everlasting covenant for all generations (Genesis 17).

The New Testament Christians rejected the current Jewish belief that God's message was complete in the Old Testament, and of course Mormonism has rejected the common Catholic and Protestant belief that God's message was completed in the New Testament. We believe that God will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God (Article of Faith, 9). One Bible commentator has characterized the "true prophet" as "a progressive, who continually advanced in knowledge and grace." The false prophet "harped continually on the same old string, merely repeating what former prophets had said ... instead of waiting upon Jehovah himself, and from his never-failing treasury bringing forth 'things new and old'" (Abingdon Commentary, p. 151).

Neither the Bible nor Mormonism has ever claimed that truth is to be found only in the official canon. It must be remembered that every new revelation ever given has always been outside of the official canon initially. To reject an idea simply because it sounds new or different is to reject one of the most fundamental principles of the Judeo-Christian religion epitomized in the statement of Jesus, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt 11:15, etc). He clearly had a deeper message which those who remain on the surface will never grasp. As a result of this line of thought, some Mormons believe the Adam-God theory even though it was never official doctrine, never canonized, and not supported from previous scripture. Personally, I do not find this conclusion unreasonable. There are, however, those who are extreme in their acceptance of the Adam-God theory, are known as fundamentalist Mormons, or just fundamentalists.

Fundamentalist Mormon Argument

On several points the fundamentalist position is identical to that of the non-Mormon Christian - namely, that the Adam-God theory was official Mormon doctrine, and that prophets cannot disagree. Where they differ is in that they believe it is true and scriptural. Non-Mormon Christians believe Mormonism is false because early leaders taught the Adam-God theory. Fundamentalists believe current Mormonism is false because recent leaders have not taught it. They frequently resort to considerable twisting of the scriptures and the teachings of Joseph Smith in order to force them to harmonize with the Adam-God theory. I have stated what I believe to be the doctrine of the scriptures. As for Joseph Smith, he clearly taught that Adam holds a position of authority superior to any of the prophets, that he stands at the head of his posterity, and presides over the spirits of mankind; that it is by Adam's authority that the keys are revealed; and that he will judge the saints. However, the most central issue of the Adam-God theory - that God the Father became Adam - has not been found among Joseph Smith's teachings; it has not been shown that he believed that Adam was the Father of our spirits; and he clearly taught that Adam's high position of authority is yet subordinate to

that of Jesus Christ (Words of Joseph Smith, p. 9-12, 38-44). Most of the points previously discussed also apply to the fundamentalist argument. There is one point I wish to discuss further. They claim to be disciples of Brigham Young. Yet I believe they have misunderstood him to a greater degree than even the non-Mormon Christians have. I believe Brigham Young himself would denounce their position in the

strongest of terms. By declaring that Church leaders are in apostasy they have created a division over a subject he said "does not immediately concern yours or my welfare," one which he said "should not trouble us at all." They have lost sight of what he believed was most important:

"We must be one. Our faith must be concentrated in one great work - the building up of the Kingdom of God on earth, and our works must aim at the accomplishment of that great purpose" (JD 7:280).

"Even when a leader is in error he emphasized maintaining unity:.. it is not the place for any person to correct any person who is superior to them but to ask the Father in the name of Jesus to bind him up from speaking false principles. I have known many times I have preached wrong but I asked the Father in the name of Jesus to take it from the minds of the people and I believe he always did drop the veil over it. Let your faith be for that man but do not oppose and get up a division between them" (Thomas Bullock minutes, May 8, 1854, HDC).

On another occasion he stated:

"Let the kingdom alone, the Lord steadies the ark; and if it does jostle, and appear to need steadying, if the way is a little sideling sometimes, and to all appearance threatens its overthrow, be careful how you stretch forth your hands to steady it; let us not be too officious in meddling with that which does not concern us; let it alone, it is the Lord's work." (JD 11:252).

Since fundamentalists believe that Brigham Young was a true prophet, I do not feel they can justify hindering one of his major goals by their unbalanced preoccupation with one of his more obscure doctrinal beliefs. There are three additional attitudes which I have heard expressed by Mormons which I wish to mention.

1. Some are totally disinterested in anything except the teachings of the present leaders. These are working in the present and looking to the future without ever looking back. There is no spark of concern for past issues. There are those most critical of this attitude. Although I am one who must look back, I find myself unable to criticize those not so inclined.
2. Some have insisted that Brigham Young never taught the Adam-God theory; that he has been misquoted, inaccurately reported, or misinterpreted. This was a reasonable view for many years when the entire argument was founded only upon Brigham Young's April 9, 1852 discourse. As additional sources have been discovered this position has become less and less tenable until now I believe it should be totally discarded.
3. Finally, some Mormons believe that after a fair examination of all relevant points several reasonable conclusions could be reached. Convinced that Mormonism does not stand or fall upon the issue of the Adam-God theory, they are satisfied to suspend final judgement on the matter until further light is shed. Although many individuals have an will resolve the matter for themselves, I am certain that their conclusions will continue to be varied because of the several seemingly reasonable approaches to the issue. In conclusion I include what I consider to be the most reasonably stated position on the issue. It is extracted from an unpublished letter of President Joseph F. Smith to Bishop Edward Bunker, February 27, 1902: "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 of the kingdom, it is never-the less my wish and my advice, in which Presidents Winder and Lund, my counselors, heartily join, that the Elders should not make a practice 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 my 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 ...Let us be content with what is plainly revealed on this 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."

I have attempted to present as fairly as I could in so brief a work the various attitudes I have encountered on this interesting subject. Whatever conclusion most appeals, I am confident that Brigham Young, if he were here, would be dismayed that his few statements on this one subject have prevented some people from giving a fair examination to the restored gospel and church that inspired and motivated him. A man of remarkable common sense, Brigham Young did not think that the existence of sun spots should lead one to turn away from the sun's warmth and light.

This is said to have been a letter to an unnamed member of the church from the First Presidency dated 20 February 1912. The original is supposed to be held in the Church Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

Dear Brother:

Your question concerning Adam has not been answered before because of pressure of important business. We now respond briefly, but, we hope, plainly. You speak of "the assertion made by Brigham Young that Jesus was begotten of the Father in the flesh by our father Adam, and that Adam is the father of Jesus Christ and not the Holy Ghost," and you say that Elders are challenged by certain critics to prove this.

If you will carefully examine the sermon to which you refer, in the Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, you will discover that, while President Young denied that Jesus was "begotten of the Holy Ghost," he did not affirm, in so many words, that "Adam is the father of Jesus Christ in the flesh." He said, "Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden and who is our Father in Heaven. Who is our "Father in Heaven"? Here is what President Young said about him; "Our Father in heaven begat all the spirits that ever were or ever will be upon this earth and they were born spirits in the eternal world. Then the Lord by his power and wisdom organized the mortal tabernacle of man." Was He in the Garden of Eden? Surely He gave commandments to Adam and Eve; He was their Father in Heaven; they worshipped Him and taught their children after the fall to worship and obey Him in the name of the Son who was to come.

But President Young went on to show that our father Adam,--that is, our earthly father,--the progenitor of the race of man, stands at our head, being "Michael the Archangel, the Ancient of Days," and that he was not fashioned from earth like an adobe, but "begotten by his Father in Heaven." Adam is called in the Bible "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). It was our Father in Heaven who begat the spirit of him who was "the Firstborn" of all the spirits that come to this earth, and who was, also his Father by the Virgin Mary, making him "the only begotten in the flesh." Read Luke 1:26-35. Where is Jesus called "the only begotten of the Holy Ghost?" He is always singled out as "the only begotten of the Father." (John 1:14;3:16,18, &c) The Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and her conception was under that influence, even of the spirit of life; our Father in Heaven was the Father of the Son of Mary, to whom the Savior prayed, as did our earthly father Adam.

When President Young asked, "who is the Father?" he was speaking of Adam as the father of our earthly bodies, who is at our head, as revealed in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 107, verses 53-56. In that sense he is one of the gods referred to in numerous scriptures, and particularly by Christ (John 10:34-36). He is the great Patriarch, the Ancient of Days, who will stand in his place as "a prince over us forever," and with whom we shall "have to do," as each family will have to do with its head, according to the holy patriarchal order. Our father, Adam, perfected and glorified as a God, will be the being who will carry out the behests of the great Elohim in relation to his posterity. (See Daniel 7:9-14.)

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

Your brethren,
/s/Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, Charles W. Penrose
First Presidency

Adam-God Theory.

Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.18 ADAM-GOD-THEORY

See ADAM, ANCIENT OF DAYS, BIRTHRIGHT, CELESTIAL MARRIAGE, EXALTATION, GOD, GODHOOD, MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, PATRIARCHAL CHAIN, PATRIARCHAL ORDER, PLURALITY OF GODS. Cultists and other enemies of the restored truth, for their own peculiar purposes, sometimes try to make it appear that Latter-day Saints worship Adam as their Father in heaven. In support of their false assumptions, they quote such statements as that of President Brigham Young to the effect that Adam is our father and our god and the only god with whom we have to do. This statement, and others of a similar nature, is perfectly consistent and rational, when viewed in full gospel perspective and understood

in the light of the revelations relative to the patriarchal chain binding exalted beings together. Full and detailed explanations of all important teachings on these points are readily available. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, pp. 96-106.)

Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.18 ADAM-GOD-THEORY

Faithful members of the Church worship the Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and view Adam in his proper high place as the pre-existent Michael, the first man and presiding high priest (under Christ) over all the earth for all time, and as the one who will again lead the armies of heaven in the final great war with Lucifer. There is a sense, of course, in which Adam is a god. But so also, in the same sense, are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses and all the ancient prophets; Peter, James, and John; and all the righteous saints of all ages, including those of both high and low degree.

Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.18 ADAM-GOD-THEORY

All exalted beings become joint-heirs with Christ and inherit the fulness of the Father's kingdom. Having entered in at the gate of celestial marriage, and having pressed forward in righteousness, overcoming all things, they pass by the angels and the gods "to their exaltation and glory in all things. . . . Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, Because they have all power, and he angels are subject unto them." (D. & C. 132:19-20.) Of all these Adam is the chief, presiding (under Christ and the Father) in the patriarchal order over all the rest. There is no mystery about this doctrine except that which persons ignorant of the great principles of exaltation and unfriendly to the cause of righteousness have attempted to make.