

# **Chapter 10**

## **The Godhead and God**

### **The Book of Mormon and Modalism**

The chapter begins with the authors citing Melodie Moench Charles (pp. 123-24) to the effect that the Book of Mormon teaches Modalism. Briefly, Modalism is a theology that teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three expressions or modes (whence “Modalism”) of the one and same person. Critics, such as Charles, often cite Mosiah 15:1-4 and Ether 3:14 to show that the theology of the Book of Mormon is consistent with Modalism. Notwithstanding, Mosiah 15:1-4, if understood as Modalism, offers a very odd variation of this heresy, with the “Father” being equated with Jesus’ pre-mortal spirit and the “Son” with His body. As for Ether 3:14, Jesus’ spirit is presented as anthropomorphic (Ether 3:16). Modalists, however, hold God as an indivisible, omnipresent, immaterial spirit essence without body parts or passions.

To understand the references to Jesus Christ as the “Father,” Mosiah 3:8 reveals that this is to be understood that Jesus is not the same mode as the Father, but that Jesus is the creator. Furthermore, in Mosiah 15:10-13, Jesus is the Father in the sense that those who are saved by Him become His children.

That the Book of Mormon treats the Father and Son as separate personages can be seen in verses such as 2 Nephi 31:11-12, 14-15; 3 Nephi 9:15; 17:4, 15; and 26:15. Furthermore, Moses 4:1-2 (from 1830) and D&C 76:20-24 (from 1832) reveal that the early revelations of the Prophet, only a short time after the publication of the Book of Mormon, treat the Father and Son as separate persons.

### **The Number of God in LDS theology**

As for the number of Gods (pp. 124-26), in Latter-day Saint theology, by definition, God is the one supreme, absolute being; the ultimate source of the entire universe; the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good Creator, Ruler, and Preserver of all things. In LDS theology, this refers to –

(1) God the Father, the ultimate power and authority of the whole universe (e.g., D&C 121:32)

(2) The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are perfectly united as One God in that they share the same will, love, and covenant with one another, consistent with Book of Mormon passages such as Alma 11:44 and Mormon 7:7.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1979), 317

In this respect, Alma 11:23-31 is consistent with LDS belief, as there is only One God. However, if one is to claim that this refutes multiple gods being in the midst of God, then one is theologically illiterate.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, for example, “gods” is found in reference to beings that are not supreme. For example, there are divinities that are inferior or subordinate or divinities only by permission of the head God. Such divinities were felt to have religious power and authority, but only by participation or permission from the higher God. In the Hebrew Bible, a member of the court of ‘El (*cedat ‘El*), angels and possibly gods of foreign nations are called gods in this sense. The various mediating principles and half-personified divine attributes found in the Hebrew writings such as *debar* or the divine word of Wisdom would belong to this class. In the New Testament, “the Word” and “the Mediator,” are also used in this sense in the Epistles of Paul and the Gospel of John. In such passages, Christ is viewed as a subordinate being even though he is considered as divine and meriting worship.

Further, Mormons refer to subordinate “gods” in two senses primarily. First, speak of the gods in the “council of the gods before the world was.” Thus, the Father is referred to as ruling in “the council of Eternal God of all other gods” (D&C 121:32); and the Book of Abraham states that “the gods organized and formed heaven and the earth (Abraham 4:1). This use of the word “god” is essentially equivalent to the Old Testament usage that refers to Yahweh or the Yahweh ‘Elohim planning with and ruling over a council of gods who are subordinate to him (e.g., the Hebrew of Job 1:6, Psalms 8:5; 58:1; 86:8).<sup>2</sup> The Bible supports that there are multiple gods in the midst of God. What follows is my analysis of the allegedly strict monotheistic pericope of scripture, such as Isaiah 44:6-8, the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4), and pericope conducive to multiple gods, consistent with Latter-day Saint theology.

### **Isaiah 44:6-8 et al.**

One must keep in mind many things when analysing Isaiah –

The work is very poetic where hyperbole and imagery are considered to be the norm. Therefore, we shouldn’t be surprised to find Isaiah referring to nations, princes and armies using the same hyperbolic language - implying they are “nothing.”

All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing, and vanity... that bringeth princes to nothing; that maketh the judges of the earth as vanity (Isaiah 40:17, 23)

“Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contend with thee:

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<sup>2</sup> Blake T. Ostler, *Exploring Mormon thought volume 1: the attributes of God* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2001), 8-9

they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.” (Isaiah 41:12).

It follows that Isaiah understood these other gods to be “nothing” in the same sense that he understood the armies, nations and princes to be “nothing.” Clearly Isaiah did not deny “true existence” to the nations. Some scholars view this rhetoric as little more than mockery and sarcasm.

Words translated as “beside” and other like-terms in Hebrew do not preclude other gods. Indeed, the word translated, as “beside” in Isaiah 44 is the Hebrew word, *zwl*, which means “in preference to” or “equal to,” not as monotheistic as English *translations* of the Bible. Isaiah 45:5 uses the Hebrew word *‘epes* which means that Yahweh is unequalled among the midst of the council of God. These are hardly verses supporting strict monotheism.

Furthermore, as Richard R. Hopkins<sup>3</sup> notes, if a proper noun, such as “Joshua” were substituted for the word “God” in Isaiah 43:3, 10 and 44:6, these scriptures would read, “I am the Lord, your Joshua,” “before Me there was no Joshua formed” or “there is no Joshua besides me.” Notwithstanding “Joshua” being the Hebrew form of Jesus, its substitution as a personal pronoun does not communicate the meaning intended in this passage. The word “God” in these passages was not meant to refer to an specific person. It was used to refer to an authority, a position, or an office, of which there is only one.

It is irrelevant, therefore, that there are three members of the Godhead who could have delivered that message. Each of them would have spoken as the “only God” for there is only one principal or ultimate authority over man. Theoretically, the Father could have many divine agents, each of whom, if worthy, could hold the title “God.” To man, there would still be only one principal, only one ultimate authority over the heavens and the earth.

## **Deuteronomy 6:4**

Contra popular belief, the original meaning of the Shema does not indicate strict monotheism as commonly understood in modern times.

Non-LDS scholar Margaret Barker recognizes the "overwhelming" evidence that early Christians identified Christ with Jehovah in the Old Testament, and in doing so, addresses the issue of how they understood Deut. 6:4. The following excerpt is taken from her book, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God* (London: SPCK, 1992, pp. 192-193, as cited by Kevin Christensen, *Paradigms Regained: A Survey of Margaret Barker's Scholarship and Its Significance for Mormon Studies*, FARMS Occasional

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<sup>3</sup> Richard R. Hopkins, *How Greek Philosophy corrupted the Christian concept of God* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers and Distributors, 1998), 379

Papers (Provo: FARMS, 2001), pp. 24-25):

The evidence that the first Christians identified Jesus with the God of the Jews is overwhelming; it was their customary way of reading the Old Testament. The appearances of Yahweh or the angel of Yahweh were read as manifestations of the pre-existent Christ. The Son of God was their name for Yahweh. This can be seen clearly in the writings of Paul who applied several 'Lord' texts to Jesus. . . . Now Paul, though completely at home in the Greek world, claimed to have been the strictest of Jews, educated in Jerusalem and zealous for the traditions of his people. How is it that he, of all people, could distinguish between God and Lord as he did in 1 Corinthians, if this was not already a part of first century Jewish belief? He emphasized that this distinction was fundamental to his belief: "there is one God, the Father . . . and one Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:6). This is, to say the least, a remarkable contradiction of Deuteronomy 6:4, *if he understood that verse in the way that we do, as a statement of monotheism*. If, on the other hand, it was a statement of the unity of Yahweh as the one inclusive summing up of all the heavenly powers, the *'elohim*, then it would have been compatible with belief in God Most High also. (emphasis in Barker's original text)

While the opening words of the Shema are generally interpreted as a ringing affirmation of monotheism, their original sense was "Yahweh is our god, Yahweh alone," an expression of the exclusive worship of Yahweh also commanded in the Decalogue (Deuteronomy 5:7), while implicitly recognising other gods, as the first commandment of the Decalogue does not express monotheism, according to Michael Coogan, but rather presumes that other gods exist. As in a marriage, one of the primary analogues for covenant, Israel is to be faithful, like a wife to her husband or, as in a treaty, like a vassal to his suzerain. When the prophets condemn the Israelites for having worshiped other gods in violation of this commandment, the metaphors of marital and political fidelity are often invoked, sometimes graphically (e.g., Ezekiel 16:23-34; 23:2-12; Jeremiah 2:23-25; 3:1-10). Yahweh is a jealous husband (e.g., Exodus 34:14) and the worship of other gods, or making alliances with foreign powers, provokes his rage.<sup>4</sup>

### **Genesis 1:26 and the assembly of Gods**

According to Old Testament scholar, Michael D. Coogan, the use of the plural in this verse, as elsewhere (Genesis 3:22; 11:7) refers to the divine council, the assembly of the gods.<sup>5</sup>

### **Genesis 20:13**

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<sup>4</sup> Michael D. Coogan, *The Old Testament: a historical and literary introduction to the Hebrew scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 176, 116.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 9. A possible counter would be that the plural verbs used in this verse are the "royal we" pronoun. Notwithstanding, Hebrew does not have a "royal we" pronoun. Also, such was not devised until Augustus.

The Hebrew of Genesis 20:13 uses plural verb structures and plural persons when discussing the (true) Gods who caused Abraham to wander. It is rendered – *Wyhy k'sr ht'w 'ty 'lhym mbbyt 'by* ... (English: "And it came to pass when (the) Gods caused me to wander from my father's house..."). Another way to put it: "And it came to pass when they, (the) Gods, caused me to wander from the house of my father..." Not only is this consistent with LDS theology, but also supports the creation story in the Book of Abraham. If it had been the singular 'God', it would have been *ht'h 'lhym* rather than the plural *ht'w 'lhym*. Yet, in spite of the Hebrew, no one seems willing to translate this passage literally. Nevertheless, plural gods are mentioned in the Hebrew of the text.

### **Deuteronomy 32:7-9**

While the KJV uses “sons of Adam,” the Dead Sea Scrolls has “Sons of God,” that Bible scholars understand to denote “gods.” The following is the NRSV rendition, chosen as this translation captures the Hebrew idioms and poetic formulations (emphasis added):

7. Remember the days of old,  
consider the years long past:  
ask your father, and he will  
inform you;  
your elders and they will tell you.  
8. When **the Most High**  
**apportioned the nations,**  
when he divided humankind,  
**he fixed the boundaries of the**  
**peoples**  
**according to the number of the**  
**gods;**  
9. the **Lord's own portion was his**  
**people,**  
**Jacob his allotted share.**

We can see a number of things from this pericope, and the others cited above:

- There are many true gods in the midst of God (the Most High)
- YHWH (“Lord,” who inherited Israel) is not the Most High
- YHWH is ontologically subordinate to the Most High. The gods spoken of in Deuteronomy 32:7-9, according to Bible scholars, are members of the divine council representing subordinate gods (lit. “Sons of God”).
- Latter-day Saint theology is utterly consistent, and supported by, with the original meaning of Deuteronomy 32.

Of course, while there are multiple gods in the midst of God, we must not place these gods in the same level as God the Father, for we read, that there is, to us, One God, the Father, and One Lord, Jesus Christ (see my exegesis below).

## 1 Corinthians 8

Many anti-Mormons attack the LDS interpretation of this chapter, saying that Paul is discussing “so-called” gods and false deity.

It is true that Paul is discussing false gods and idols. However, he makes an interesting comment, in that there are gods “in heaven.” False idols, made by human hands, cannot possibly be in heaven, so Paul must be discussing gods in the sense LDS understand this passage.

Indeed, readings of the Greek text reveals Paul's sentence structure and use of existential verbs indicate that the gods in heaven and earth to which he speaks are quite real. I think part of the problem is caused by the fact that the term now often translated "so-called" is just one of the meanings of the word in question. In some Greek texts this refers to something's title, or meaning "titled" or "to have the appellation of" and think it most likely the meaning in this passage. Thus Paul was referring to those who have the appellation or title of gods in both heaven and earth. It speaks nothing as to their nature. It also speaks not to idols for there are no idols or false gods in heaven. Additionally, Paul did not say, "there are people who believe that there are many gods and many lords in heaven and on earth" or "there are people who falsely believe that there are many gods and many lords in heaven or on earth" but he said, "There ARE many gods and lords in heaven or on earth."

## God as embodied

It is true, as the authors note, that the Book of Psalms uses metaphors for God, such as that in Psalm 91:4 where God is said to have wings. Notwithstanding, such is to be expected, as the Book of Psalms is Hebrew poetry, not historical narrative, such as Ezekiel 1:26 has the prophet describing God on the throne in “the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it.” If such anthropomorphic language is metaphorical (p. 126-27), what was Ezekiel’s metaphor when he simply described what he saw?

John 4:24 is also cited, as is Alma 18:26-28 against the Mormon belief that God is embodied. I will now deal with these two scriptures.

### John 4:24

If John 4:24 is interpreted in the restrictive manner endorsed by Evangelicals, it must also be construed as a requirement that men shed their physical bodies in order to worship God. If God is *only* spirit and this passage requires men to worship Him “in spirit,” then men must worship God *only* in spirit. Thus, to cite John 4:24 against the teachings of Mormon theology is to claim that men cannot worship God as mortal beings.

That conclusion is obviously contrary to the Bible, which uses the present tense to

command all men to worship God (e.g., 1 Chronicles 16:29). The idea that John 4:24 describes God exclusively as a Spirit therefore, must be rejected. It merely tells of God's spirituality and requires the same of men. It does not address God's physiological nature - only the means by which men communicate with Him. Men must do spiritually, that is, spirit to Spirit, and must therefore develop a spiritual nature.<sup>6</sup>

A related criticism is that if God were to possess a physical body, this would make divine omnipresence impossible; such as God would be "limited" or rendered "finite" by that body. Therefore, the argument continues. God as perceived by Latter-day Saints could not be omnipresent, something required in this verse. But Mormons affirm only that the Father has a body, not that his body has him. The Father is corporeal and infinitely more, and is a spirit can be omnipresent without being *physically* present, then so can a God who possesses a body and a spirit.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the Bible affirms that, though the Father has a body (Revelations 7:10), His glory, influence, and power fills the universe (Jeremiah 23:34). He is continually aware of everything in the universe, and can communicate with, and travel to, any spot instantaneously (Psalms 139:7-12).

### **The Book of Mormon and the Great Spirit**

The use of the phrase "Great Spirit" in the Book of Mormon was Ammon's way of communicating the concept of God to someone who knew of Deity as "Great Spirit." More importantly, however, is that the people mistook Ammon for the Great Spirit, notwithstanding the fact that he was plainly corporeal (e.g., Alma 18:2-3)! Use of the phrase does not preclude God being corporeal.

## **The Bible and God's body**

As for God being corporeal, as clearly taught in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 130:22), such has strong support from the biblical texts, some of which I will now discuss.

### **Genesis 1:26-27**

The word translated as "image" is the Hebrew word, *tselem*, that is used of statues and paintings as resembling, physically, their models. The word translated as "likeness," *demuth*, is used for resemblance, similitude, or pattern. Notwithstanding attempts to spiritualise these verses, the plain meaning of these verses is that God is corporeal.

### **Hebrews 1:3**

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<sup>6</sup> Richard R. Hopkins, *Biblical Mormonism: Responding to Evangelical criticism of LDS theology* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers and Distributors, 1994), 55-56

<sup>7</sup> Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How wide the divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in conversation* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1997), 88

Christ could only be the exact representation of the Father if the Father Himself possessed a body of some sort. In fact, some who wish to avoid what I feel is the plain meaning of Hebrews 1:3 actually go so far as to separate the natures of Christ or declare that the passage could not possibly infer that the Father is embodied.

Those who criticise this meaning thus, however, do not take into account the fact that there is not one portion of the passage that differentiates between the divine and human nature of Jesus. Secondly, the particle *ὣν* *on* indicates *being* (I.e., the *present* state of existence of Jesus from the perspective of the author of Hebrews). It has absolutely nothing to do with only Jesus' previous state or of only a portion of His supposed dual nature. It only speaks of his existence as a person.

Further, many grammarians have severely misunderstood the Greek *ἀπαύγασμα* *apaugasma* (English [active] *effulgence* or *radiance*; [middle; passive] *reflection*) in this passage to have the active sense. The Greek *καὶ* *kai* (English: *and*) is here a coordinating conjunction, which combines the first and second parts (the second part being of a passive character) of a parallel couplet. Due to this fact, as much as the Evangelicals wish doggedly to hold to their interpretation, the Greek *apaugasma* should be understood as having a passive sense.

Why? Because the second portion of the couplet indicates that Jesus is the *exact representation* of the Father's substantial nature, **not** that he is *synonymous with* that nature. Since this passage is a couplet, with the second portion being passive in nature, the first portion must be understood as having a passive sense as well. Thus, Jesus is properly to be seen as He "who is the *reflection* of the glory (of God) and the *exact representation* of the substantial nature of Him (I.e., the Father)."

In short, the glory of God *reflects* from Jesus rather than having Jesus as its source, according to the theology of the author of Hebrews. Thusly, Jesus *exactly represents* God, as He exists in all aspects of His being, including (and necessitating) being corporeal.

### **Numbers 23:19**

Frequently cited by critics of the Church in their attempt to prove that God is an incorporeal spirit, Numbers 23:19 actually means quite the opposite.

The first word translated as "man" in this verse comes from the Hebrew word, *אִישׁ* *'ish*, which is a *comparative* form of the word "man." This word is used to compare one type of man with another, not to contrast men with other species of beings. It is used, for example, to refer to a man as opposed to a woman, a husband as opposed to a wife, a younger man as opposed to an older man.

Women, wives, and older men are all beings of the same species. The Hebrew word, *'ish* assumes that characteristic as the point of similarity on which it is used to make



comparisons. Those comparisons are made only on the basis of gender, marital status, age, etc., not on the basis of species. In this passage, the attribute being compared through the use of the word *ish* is the trait of *honesty*, not manhood. The verse compares God as a man who does not lie with mortal men who do. The passage always assumes that God is a man.

The words translated “a son of man” in the next portion of the verse are taken from the Hebrew, בן אדם *ben adam*, a phrase used to refer specifically to a mortal man, literally a descendant of Adam. The contrast is not between God and man, for that would have required use of the Hebrew word *adam* alone. The contrast is between God, an *immortal* Man who is morally perfect, and *mortal* men who are morally imperfect and in need of repentance. Again, the assumption is that God is a man.

The language of this verse in the original Hebrew was obviously chosen with great care to avoid any suggestion that God is a different species or has a different nature than man. Unfortunately, that care did not survive translation into English. Numbers 23:19 proclaims that God does *not* differ from man in nature, substance, or essence. Rather, it teaches that mortal men are imperfect, while God is a perfect Man.<sup>8</sup>

### **Science and the advantages of an embodied God**

In 1905, a physicist from the University of Zurich named Albert Einstein derived a simple equation that demonstrates conclusively the equivalence of matter and energy.

The formula is  $E=mc^2$ . It states that, if  $m$  units of mass could be made to disappear, the units of energy that would be liberated would be  $m$  times the speed of light *squared*! In actual numbers, using the speed of light in a vacuum ( $2.99793 \times 10^{10}$  centimetres per second), this means that it would require nearly 900 quintillion (900,000,000,000,000,000,000) units of energy to be equivalent to just *one* unit of mass!

The theological implications of that ratio have never been considered by classical theists. What it means is that a being composed of matter contains, by nature, 900 quintillion times more energy (I.e., power) than would a being composed of pure energy (I.e., an incorporeal spirit being as taught by “Orthodox” Christianity).

Classical theists might argue that concentration of energy in a corporeal God is irrelevant to any theological discussion of His omnipotence. But, if God is real, and the Bible clearly treats Him as though He were, His omnipotence would require the ability to exercise real power, and real power requires energy.

They may also argue that, since their idea of an incorporeal God is one who fills the universe, there is no need for God to be corporeal - infinite size being a more than

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<sup>8</sup> Hopkins, *Greek Philosophy*, 259-60

adequate compensation for lack of energy density. Rational consideration of that argument leads, however, to the conclusion that an incorporeal entity who is attenuated throughout the universe would simply be weaker everywhere than a corporeal being who could instantaneously travel to any spot in the universe He chose.

Under any logical scenario, the nature of matter, as demonstrated by Einstein, will always make corporeality a better medium in which to exercise omnipotence than any medium that is incorporeal. This is especially so in light of the fact that the ration of corporeality to in-corporeality could be as much as 900 quintillion to one. The point is that it is entirely logical and consistent to teach the corporeal God described in the Bible is omnipotent.<sup>9</sup>

## God as unchanging

The teaching [that God is an exalted man] belittles God and reduces him to our level. It also goes against every scripture in the Bible which speaks of God as unchanging. For example, “For I am the Lord, I change not” (Mal 3:6). Once again, the Book of Mormon would agree: “For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being, but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity” [Moroni 8:18] (P. 128)

Firstly, it should be noted that the King Follett Discourse, given by the Prophet in April 6, 1844, does not state that the Father began as a man. Indeed, the prophet stated that the Father was mortal in the same way as was Jesus Christ.<sup>10</sup> This would suggest that the Father was God before, and even during, mortality.

As for scriptures referring to God as “eternal” and unchanging, such can be reconciled with Latter-day Saint theology due to the following:

- The attributes of deity have always existed, having no real beginning, and will have no end, regardless of who holds such attributes.
- Such attributes that are said to be unchangeable cannot refer to elements of metaphysical nature. After all, Jesus is said to be, in Hebrews 13:8, the same yesterday, today, and forever, is said to have emptied Himself in Philippians 2:6-11.
- The ancients did not have the same loose understanding of “eternal” and other like-terms as we moderns do. Indeed, the loose understanding of “infinite” is a 4<sup>th</sup> century CE construct. The Hebrew for eternal is *‘olam* which denotes a very long period of time, oftentimes beyond the comprehension of the author, but still had inherent time restrictions. This is why such terms were used many times in nearby verses, but even then, still had inherent time restraints. Furthermore, another example can be seen in the use of *infinutum* (whence “infinity” and “infinite”) in the Latin Bible. Such is used

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 308-309

<sup>10</sup> Marvin Hill, *The essential Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1995), 235

to denote the number of participants in armies in battle. When such verses from the Bible and Book of Mormon are understood as the ancients would have interpreted them, such a criticism against LDS theology is quashed.

- In Mormon theology, we have all existed from all eternity, our form being that of an intelligence and all the attributes inherent within intelligence (e.g., Abraham 3:18). Such intelligences were not, and cannot be created, having no beginning nor end. God has existed in like manner, according to Joseph Smith.

## Adam-God

A number of things should be kept in mind about the “Adam-God” doctrine (pp. 128-30):

- Michael’s (Adam) pre-eminence among the angels is affirmed by both scripture (Daniel 10:13; Jude 1:9) and in LDS history and scripture (*History of the Church* 3:385-86; 4:207, 210; D&C 78:16).
- The Adam-God theory is inconsistent with numerous ancient and modern scriptures (e.g., Genesis 2:7; Luke 3:38; D&C 29:34; Abraham 5:7, 13-15).
- Adam-God statements are primarily found in Church journals which are not considered to be Church doctrine unless they conform to the standard works. The often quoted *Journal of Discourses* is a 26-volume record of speeches by early LDS leaders from 1854 to 1886. Although it is a valuable and basically accurate source of LDS theology, it cannot be considered a source of official doctrine for several reasons: (1) it was not an official publication of the Church, (2) limitations of hand-recording by scribes of that day may have introduced errors into the sermons, and, more importantly, (3) its contents, outside those portions found in modern scripture, were not ratified as official canon by the Priesthood or general Church membership.
- Statements of Brigham Young as contained in the *Journal of Discourses* are, at times, contradictory. In the same sermon where statements referring to Adam-God are found, Brigham Young also taught that there were three that created the earth: “Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael” (*Journal of Discourses* 1:50-51). Note that Brigham Young taught in this same sermon that (1) Adam was Michael, (2) Adam was a “God,” (3) the first earthly tabernacles (those of Adam and Eve) were “originated by the Father,” and (4) “earth was organised by Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum.” Later, Brigham Young also taught that “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...” (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:148).<sup>11</sup>
- A lot of confusion has resulted due to the letter that the authors mention and quote from (pp. 129-30) from Bruce McConkie sent to Eugene England, admitting that Young taught the Adam-God doctrine. Notwithstanding, when LDS researcher, Elden Watson presented his work on Adam-God and statements by Brigham Young,

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<sup>11</sup> Michael W. Hickenbotham, *Answering challenging Mormon Questions* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers and Distributors, 1994), 57-58

McConkie reversed his position as expressed in the Eugene England letter.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Elden Watson, "Different Thought - #7: Adam-God," accessible (via [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)) from [www.wasatchnet/users/ewatson/7AdamGod.htm](http://www.wasatchnet/users/ewatson/7AdamGod.htm)