

demonstrated a small part of the strain polygamy enacted in the 1855–56 reconstruction of the Follett sermon.

Another example of such strain within the church historians' 1850s sermon project was the redaction of Eliza R. Snow's reports of JS speaking to the Nauvoo Female Relief Society. Snow originally reported JS delivering keys to the society, working to make them a kingdom of priests, "as in Enoch's day." Church historian George A. Smith rewrote Snow's account with JS "delivering the keys of the Priesthood to the church and that the faithful members of the Relief Society should receive them in connection with their husbands." In Snow's report, JS asked that the Society place confidence in their chosen presidency (Emma Smith, Sarah Cleveland, Elizabeth Whitney). In the revision, the women were enjoined to faith in their husbands and church leaders. The reasoning for these and other changes was founded in apostolic succession and the situating of Emma Hale Smith as dissenter and enemy of the church. Brigham Young distrusted the Relief Society for those reasons and the suggestion that it had some parity of ecclesiastical standing with male dominated institutions.⁴⁷

In JS's founding documents—including Follett—his successors found an afterlife that was made joyful and glorious by remaining eternally connected to an expanded family and their earthly descendants. This cosmology required little reassignment of terms to *come to, and believe in*, a God who sired those spirits, just as human parents

sermons see *Parallel Joseph*. Also Smith, *Every Word Seasoned With Grace*, chs. 9, 10. On dissent and JS's denials, see Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 533–38.

47. Snow's original text for April 28, 1842, may be read online at *JSP*. George Smith's revised text, approved by Brigham Young, is found in Church Historian's Office. *History of the Church, 1839–circa 1882*, vol. 3, pp. 1302, 1326, vol. 4 addenda pp. 26–27, 38–43, CR 100 102, CHL. See also Church Historian's Office Journal, vol. 17, pp. 361–62, CR 100 1, CHL. For the two texts in parallel, see *Parallel Joseph* (April 28, 1842).

propagated their species. Yet the linking of God and sex was as repugnant to Illinois Mormons in Nauvoo times as it was to Protestants.⁴⁸

Brigham Young saw a new vision of his own in his reformatting of the Godhead, with Adam and Eve as birth parents of all human souls and the first human bodies after Eden, an idea beginning to settle by the time of the westward Mormon migration in 1847.⁴⁹ Young saw this same Adam returning to earth to sire Jesus. Eve was Mother on earth and Mother in heaven—indeed, the very mother of all. In many ways, this constellation of ideas marked the apex of Mormon alterity, yet in its focus on a domestic or later, a nuclear family, heaven represented a feature of the age. In the medieval and early modern epochs of the Christian era, it was not the preservation of earthly loving that preoccupied believers but the dread of facing the Last Judgment after death, something that the Reformers of the sixteenth century encouraged.⁵⁰

Orson Pratt rejected the theological turn of Adamic godhood; he wished to keep the fatherhood of Jesus within the classical Christian package.⁵¹ But even his system required a God-Wife, a Heavenly Mother, who was once a mortal woman; in turn, this pressed Mormonism into more than the three-story religion of Protestant Christendom.

48. See Blair Dee Hodges, "‘My Principality on Earth Began’: Millennialism and the Celestial Kingdom in the Development of Mormon Doctrine," 44.

49. On the transition, see Brigham Young, December 6, 1847, Council Minutes, Leonard J. Arrington papers. Stapley, "Brigham Young's Garden Cosmology."

50. On Adam, see for example, Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:295, 6:508. Eliza Snow's vision of God the Father and Mother became one with Adam and Eve. She made Young's assertions explicit in her own theological declarations. See, for example, her poem, "To Mrs.—," lines 75–84, item 252, in Derr and Davidson, *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*. On earlier times and the evolution of afterlife concerns, see Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*.

51. For example, Pratt, *The Seer*, 103. Gary James Bergera, "The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies: Conflict Within the Quorums, 1853–1868," 7–49; David John Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," 14–58. Turner, *Brigham Young*, 231–36.

Mormonism became a religion not just of Heaven, Earth, and Hell, but the religion of one long, connected, and self-replicating cosmos.

Nineteenth-century Mormon leaders like Young announced that Mormonism was simply a description of the way everything worked, by axiomatizing a heaven in the image of earth and positing an infinite regression of Gods mentioned above. Follett offered support here: God was once a man who owed allegiance to his own Father-God. In the end, twentieth-century Mormonism rejected and adopted different elements of both Orson Pratt and Young, cutting away the portions reciting Pratt's atomic-agent-first-cause and Young's vision of Adam and Eve in service of polygamy, while leaving behind a somewhat incoherent package of statements disconnected from their logical antecedents.⁵²

Aside from any parallel or post-Nauvoo apostolic interpretation, JS's Nauvoo system established a new calculus of reward in the afterlife: a man's earthly acquisition of (polygamous) wives and both natural and ritually *adopted* children—as in children in a family born prior to their parents being sealed together—meant an advantage in the world to come. That advantage came by virtue of descendants creating and populating worlds, in a sense, expanding a patriarch's *estate*, on a superb scale. Brigham Young and other church leaders extended their families not just by birth but also by sealing other unrelated adults to them. This practice was also termed adoption.⁵³

The King James Bible was full of language useful in shaping the contours of a belief in Mother-birthed spirits.⁵⁴ The technical details

52. The fundamental mechanism of heaven is found in Doctrine and Covenants 130:1–2. Smith, *Plural Marriage Revelation*, ch. 6.

53. On the beginnings and evolution of adoption theology in Mormonism, see Samuel Brown, “Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation.” Jonathan A. Stapley, “Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism.”

54. Various passages served the purpose such as those found in Gn 1, Mal 2, Mt 23, Jn 1, 5, 9, Eph 1, Col 1, Heb 12 all with an admittedly unique (and anti-Protestant)