

July 16th, 1902.

Sister Lillie Golsan,  
Autaugaville,  
Ala.

Dear Sister in the Gospel:-

Your letter of the 27th ult., making certain inquiries upon points of doctrine, faith and practice of our Church, concerning which you say some of our elders differ, was received by me on the 8th inst., and I answer at the earliest opportunity.

In all such matters as this there is one thing that should be kept constantly in mind, and that is, that the theories, speculations and opinions of men, however intelligent, ingenious and plausible, are not necessarily doctrines of the Church or principles that God has commanded his servants to preach. No doctrine is a doctrine of this Church until it has been accepted as such by the Church, and not even a revelation from God should be taught to his people until it has first been approved by the presiding authority—the one through whom the Lord makes known His will for the guidance of the saints as a religious body. The spirit of revelation may rest upon any one, and teach him or her many things for personal comfort and instruction. But these are not doctrines of the Church, and, however true, they must not be inculcated until proper permission is given.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recognizes, outside the direct and heaven-inspired utterances of

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its prophet, seer and revelator, four standards of doctrine, namely, the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price, containing the revelations of God given in times past and present for the guidance, salvation and exaltation of his people. These books have been accepted by the Church, in general conference assembled, as its doctrinal standards, and nothing outside of them, whether true or false, has any practical bearing or significance, so far as the conduct of the Church is concerned. If our elders would always remember these things, and preach and practice accordingly, the differences you speak of would speedily disappear. We should avoid disputations, whatever our differences of opinion may be, and following the advice of Paul, all learn to speak the same things. Now to answer your questions:

First - "Which is the God we worship throughout eternity, Father, Son or Adam?"

We are to worship the Father in the name of the Son.

Second - "Did Adam live a mortal being twice?"

There is nothing in the records named that so states, and it is not a true doctrine.

Third - "Can a man with a living wife seal another living woman to him for eternity?"

No; nor does the Church authorize or practice any sealings in plural marriage.

Fourth - "We lived our first estate before the world was; then, in Genesis 1:27, we find that 'male and female created he them;' next we have the fact, in Genesis 2:7, that man became a living soul, to live, suffer and die, and yet through these become as God is. Please explain fully the two seeming spiritual creations."

They were not both spiritual creations; the first was spiritual,

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the second was temporal. This is evident from Genesis 2:4,5, where, in reference to the first or spirit creation, it speaks of the making of "the earth and the heavens", "every plant of the earth before it was in the earth," and "every herb of the field before it grew," and of man before there was "a man to till the ground." It is probably the use of the word "soul," in Genesis 2:7 that confuses you. With us the soul is not the spirit, as with the world; the soul is the spirit and the body combined (Doc. & Cov. Sec.88 Par.15 ). It was not until the spirit or "breath of life" passed into the body that the Lord God formed "of the dust of the ground," that "man became a living soul."

Fifth - "Is it considered adultery for an elder, while on a mission, to court and marry a woman in his field of labor?"

If the man is unmarried and the woman single, it would not be adultery, but this act would be contrary to and in violation of the instructions given to elders when they are set apart for their missions.

Sixth - "Please tell me, was there ever an Apostle or any leading member of the Church, during the practice of polygamy, cut off from the Church for marrying a widow and daughter and living with same during his mission."

I never before heard of such an incident, and I do not believe that it ever occurred.

Seventh - "Is a foolish song, without religion, love or moral, fit for a Latter-day Saint to indulge in?"

I can only say in answer to this question, that the revelations of the Lord to his Church discountenance and deprecate excessive levity and light-mindedness on the part of its members. Charity

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however would suggest that we make due allowance for differences in temperament and disposition, and that we be not too straight-laced with reference to innocent amusement and wholesome and reasonable recreation.

Hoping I have answered your questions satisfactorily, and commending your spirit of intelligent inquiry, with your testimony of firmness in the faith, of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the necessity of progress and obedience to the Gospel in its entirety, I am,

Your brother and friend,

Joseph T. Smith