This is entry 481 from Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source by Rick Grunder, of which the first, limited edition was published in digital form only as a .pdf document, 389 MB on Compact Disc (Lafayette, New York: Rick Grunder - Books, 2008). The entry reproduced below comprises pages 1925-62, followed by a list of sources cited in this entry.

In the complete book (2,088 pages), numerous links in the text allow simple internal navigation. In this "offprint" single entry, however, only links which lead to pages included here are operative. The full book also includes more than 800 subject or entry heading bookmarks ( accessible by clicking the tab at the left of the screen). In this single entry, only bookmarks which apply to these pages will appear in the bookmark panel.

— Rick Grunder, October 12, 2008


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Statement on Deity, p. 1929

A Present Mormon View, p. 1929
Deity in the Book of Mormon, p. 1931
Past Mormon Views, p. 1945

Sources cited in this entry 481, following p. 1962

18 X 15 cm.  3 pp. plus address portion, on 2 conjugate leaves.  No postal markings, apparently hand-carried; addressed to "Rev. Thomas Worcester, Salisbury."

Purchased April 18, 1988 from Dr. David B. Clark of Oak Grove, Missouri, who writes: "I did not keep a detailed record of where I purchased the letter . . . I am almost 100% certain it came from a dealer, and probably either from someone selling stampless letters, or [more likely] from someone who [as far as I can discern is no longer in business] specialized in letters from and autographs by clergy." (e-mail correspondence January 3, 2007). LOCATION: Grunder.

OVERVIEW: Announcing Noah Worcester's doctrine on the nature of deity, an important theological development which provided middle ground between Trinitarian views and those Unitarian interpretations which diminished the divinity of Christ. Worcester's fellow Congregationalist ministers would censure him after he published these ideas in Bible News, 1810 (MP 482), including Ethan Smith who would respond further by writing A Treatise on the Character of Jesus Christ . . . (MP 397) in alarmed defense of Trinitarianism.

Thomas Worcester would support Noah's conclusions, and both would suffer as a result of their views. The new Worcester doctrine would please a variety of Unitarian-leaning groups, however, including the Christian Connection. The Worcester breakthrough introduced rich precursors to eventual Mormon concepts of deity, a descriptive commentary STATEMENT of which I offer as part of this entry.

Noah WORCESTER (1758-1837; md. Hannah Brown, 1779) was born in Hollis, New Hampshire, eldest son of Noah Worcester, a justice of the peace and participant in New Hampshire's original constitutional convention. The younger Noah and three of his brothers (Leonard, Thomas and Samuel) entered the ministry like their grandfather, Francis Worcester, in the footsteps of their original American progenitor, William Worcester, founding pastor of Salisbury, Massachusetts, 1638. Noah was a fifer during the American Revolution, and was nearly captured at the battle of Bunker Hill. He did not have benefit of higher education, but his natural abilities, personal study and publications gained him honorary degrees from both Dartmouth (1791) and Harvard (Doctor of Divinity, 1818).

In early 1782, Noah and Hannah moved from Plymouth, New Hampshire to Thornton (Grafton County, central New Hampshire's White Mountain region) where Noah worked as a local teacher, farmer and shoemaker, and served as town clerk and selectman, justice of the peace and representative to the state legislature. "All the while he was educating himself, and had become interested
in religious subjects. In [1786], at the suggestion of the minister in a neighboring town [Rev. Selden Church, Campton, New Hampshire], he applied successfully for a license to preach. Late that same year his own pastor recommended him as his successor, and on Oct. 18, 1787, he was ordained minister of the Congregational church at Thornton, a position which he held for some twenty-two years." His wife died in November 1797, "leaving him with eight children, and in May 1798 he married Hannah Huntington, a native of Norwich, Conn."

In 1810, Noah published *Bible News*, the result of his years of inquiry into the nature of deity. This departure from Trinitarian views alienated the Hopkinton Association of Ministers who had originally championed his acceptance into the ministry. "The book found favor with theological liberals, however, and in 1813 Worcester was asked to become the first editor of the *Christian Disciple* (later the *Christian Examiner*), a monthly periodical projected by a group of Unitarians which included Channing and Lowell." Moving to Brighton, Massachusetts, Noah continued to publish and defend his doctrines for the rest of his life. He also turned to the cause of peace. "By nature he was gentle and irenic; controversy was repugnant to him; and in time he came to regard war, whether offensive or defensive, as unjustifiable . . . In 1814 he published *A Solemn Review of the Custom of War*, which, translated into various languages, was circulated throughout the world."

From the time of his earliest theological investigations under the mild direction of Rev. Church, Noah imbibed a spirit of love and friendship for other denominations which he maintained throughout his life, despite his assiduous publication and defense of his own, closely-defined views. His younger brother by ten years, Rev. Thomas Worcester (1768-1831, Congregational pastor at Salisbury, New Hampshire), supported Noah’s theology heartily, yet both men maintained good relations with their younger brother Samuel Worcester (1770-1821; Dartmouth, 1795), a prominent Trinitarian divine. Their brother Rev. Leonard Worcester (1767-1846) had no formal training in the ministry, but served as an apprentice in "the printing office of Isaiah Thomas, Esq., of Worcester, and became a member of his family. . . . During several years of this time, he was editor, printer, and publisher of the Mass. Spy."

—Blake, 268-69 (regarding Leonard Worcester, adding cryptically that, "The subtle Socinian speculations of his brother, Rev. Noah W., of Brighton, caused but a temporary and superficial disturbance in his views." p. 271). Regarding Leonard’s wife Elizabeth Hopkins, a grand-niece of Jonathan Edwards, see MP 34 (Austin, 160 "My father had four sons and six daughters by his first wife," wrote Noah's son Samuel in later years, "but none by the second wife. . . . Four sons and four daughters lived to adult age. . . . After the year 1817, my step-mother had very little to do with the domestic concerns. She was almost wholly devoted to my father. She read a great deal to him, took care of his papers, folded and stitched his pamphlets, and rendered him every service that she could. The affairs of the house belonged to my [youngest] sister." (Ware, 149-50).

NOAH WORCESTER’S PORTENTOUS MANUSCRIPT LETTER here at hand describes the Father and the Son as separate beings, yet the Son as fully divine:

I have been reviewing and writing again. I find that the ground which I have recently taken respecting the son of God will preclude more of what I had formerly written than I at first apprehended, and may on the whole shorten the [works ?], and render the theory more perfectly correspondent to the literal import of scripture language—
I am throwing the whole into the form of Letters in which I attempt to establish certain propositions. The propositions, on which I have already written are as follows:
1. That the supreme Being or self existent God is only one self existent person.
2. That Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God.
3. That the Son of God became man, or the Son of man, by becoming the soul of a human body. On this 3rd proposition I think I have produced evidences which candor and discernment will not be able to gainsay nor resist—
4. That the Son of God is truly a divine person. A person of divine nature and divine dignity - of divine feelings and divine authority—.

Before the end of the year, Worcester would deposit the title of his book for copyright. In February (1810) he left his loyal but small congregation in Thornton (which could not support him financially) and accepted an invitation to substitute and assist in his ailing brother Thomas’ pulpit in Salisbury (Ware, 33-34). "I hope to hear good tidings;" wrote Noah near the end of this letter,

but, if you should get better, I fear you will resume your labors too soon. I hope you will be careful in this respect. Remember that it is best to be sick soon enough and long enough; And as you failed in the first point I hope you will be careful in the second. I know it is painful to you not to be doing — but Watts felt some comfort in sickness from the thought that if he could not do, he could bear the will of God.
There is subdued drama in this momentous communication. For a full exposition of the doctrine which it heralds, see Noah Worcester's *Bible News* (MP 482). I believe this signaled a breakthrough to an original concept of deity which became, in many ways, more "Mormon" than earliest transitional Mormon theology itself would allow until 1835 (point E, further below). I have therefore chosen this entry as the place to offer my STATEMENT ON DEITY (below), a summary of Mormon views for comparative reference from various entries in this Bibliographic Source.
STATEMENT ON DEITY

The following statement summarizes Mormon concepts of the Godhead as I understand them in modern times, followed by their historical evolution from 1829 to the mid-twentieth century: **I) A PRESENT MORMON VIEW, and II) PAST MORMON VIEWS.** No effort of this sort can satisfy all readers. It will, however, supply points of reference for relevant Mormon parallel passages which appear throughout this Bibliographic Source.

To refer to THE "Mormon" concept of the Godhead, without specifying whose concept, or when, would be to ignore solid historical records in favor of what might be considered doctrinally correct, eternal truth as taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City since the early-mid twentieth century - but which, originally, would have seemed positively heretical to many of the earliest and most central Restoration leaders including, in some instances, Joseph Smith himself. Even the most traditional LDS authorities, for example, teach that young Joseph Smith entertained a different concept of the Godhead prior to 1820 than what he taught in the 1840s. But what precisely did Joseph believe, and when? How strictly was the LDS doctrine of deity defined, and when? How consistently, and how unanimously, did early Mormons define the Godhead according to any given description, and when?

Modern official doctrine is clear, I believe, and must be summarized here before it can be related in this bibliography to the many non-Mormon views of deity of Joseph Smith's time - each of which had some aspects of "Mormon" parallel, but none of which was exactly "Mormon" then, or later. The following points are assigned numbers for purpose of reference from various entries of this work.

I. A PRESENT MORMON VIEW

A present "Mormon" view of the Godhead is quite literal, and quite material. For most orthodox members of the main Utah-based, "Mormon" Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and for most other Mormon-origin denominations,

1. The Godhead is comprised of three utterly separate and distinct beings - literally three deified men. They are: God the Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost.

2. Both the Father and the Son have literal physical human-shaped, human-sized bodies of flesh and bone, whereas,

3. The Holy Ghost is indeed the Holy Spirit, an actual being also in the shape and size of a human, who has never received a body of flesh and bone.
4. Each of these deified, divine men has a separate station and role which is hierarchical: first Father, then Son, then Holy Ghost. In order to understand their physical and hierarchical stations, one must be aware of the Mormon doctrine of deification. In simplest terms,

5. God the Father was once a mortal man on another planet, and worshipped his Heavenly Father, a God above him.

6. When this man grew sufficiently in righteousness and perfection, he became a god,

7. the only God with whom we have to do as our Father in Heaven, and to whom we now pray. But before we existed either as spirits or as mortals,

8. He took scarcely-defined "intelligences" - eternal entities which had always existed, somewhere, and

9. Clothed these intelligences in human-shaped, human-sized bodies of spirit, making them His eternal spirit sons and daughters - our very selves as pre-mortal spirits abiding with God in the heavens, eager to be born into mortal bodies on worlds in order to progress.

10. Spirit, for Mormons, is actual refined matter which cannot be perceived by mortals.

11. Greatest among these spirit children of our God, the Father, was His eldest spirit Son, our eldest spirit brother,

12. by whom our earth was eventually created, and

13. who was the "Jehovah" or God who is principally referred to in the Old Testament.

14. This Son was finally born of Mary into a physical body

15. and is now the resurrected Jesus Christ, the Redeemer,

16. with a permanent physical body.

17. Jesus never was God the Father at any time.

18. God the Father was never a literal component of the spirit body or the flesh-and-bones body of His Son, Jesus Christ,

19. except through characteristics passed to His Son, rather in the sense of mortals sharing their genes and their instruction with their mortal children.

20. The Holy Ghost is presumably another spirit child of God the Father,
21. but He is more mysterious and is scarcely defined, except that He is an actual being who performs certain semi-defined acts and manifestations of the "spirit" to enhance our spiritual well-being and growth.

22. Most Mormons presume that eternal beings are either male or female (at least from the moment intelligences receive spirit bodies), so if we are children of God the Father (our Heavenly Father), then,

23. we must have one or more Heavenly Mothers. For the most orthodox Mormons, this topic is taken no further than this.

24. To complete the cycle, those of us who grow sufficiently in perfection and righteousness will one day be deified, following the universal resurrection, and will create our own spirit children from eternal intelligence entities still waiting somewhere to gain, first, a spirit body, and then a corresponding mortal body on worlds which we will create for this purpose. These, our own spirit children clothed in physical bodies, will eventually be resurrected and hopefully progress to deification. It is an unending hierarchy of systems and orderly allegiance in righteousness.

There are plenty of faithful, informed Mormons today who would not agree with all points of my summary above. There are even more Mormons who will not emphasize some of these points, particularly in times when conservative Christians of other denominations trivialize these doctrines, or use them as tools of divisive theological argument. I only offer this summary as a construct to which I can refer the many varieties of doctrine which I exhibit in this Bibliographic Source. The essay which follows is my lengthy introduction to the second part of this STATEMENT ON DEITY (II: PAST MORMON VIEWS).

DEITY IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

If the present Mormon doctrine of deity is at all subject to debate, its earliest versions were even more confusing, and inevitably controversial today. Yet one can hardly avoid this difficult topic while exploring parallel doctrines which appeared in the nineteenth-century.

For some traditionally orthodox Latter-day Saints, I presume that whatever they consider to be the present Mormon doctrine of deity is also the doctrine which they will insist was taught in the Book of Mormon and throughout all of Mormon history - indeed by any true prophet from the time of Adam to the present day. During childhood or during conversion discussions, many
Mormons have been taught about the existence of simple alternative doctrines of the Godhead: either the modern Mormon version which I summarize in points 1 - 3 above, or else a doctrine of the Trinity in the form of a presumably unsatisfactory and incomprehensible three-in-one God. Some modern readers may suppose that Mormons are therefore Unitarian, or some other traditional alternative to Trinitarian. However, such issues are highly complex, with infinite varieties and endless confusion.

Elementary Mormon instruction generally holds that young Joseph Smith entered the "Sacred Grove" in the spring of 1820 to pray as a confused but potential Trinitarian (JFS Answers 3:[56]-57), but emerged knowing from first-hand experience that the Father and the Son are two separate, distinct beings. "Many important concepts relating to Deity," according to Milton V. Backman, Jr.,

were unfolded to Joseph in 1820. He learned in the sacred grove that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God . . . He further learned that the Father and Son are separate and distinct personages. In a sermon delivered one year before his martyrdom, Joseph described the Godhead when he declared: " . . . Any person that had seen the heavens opened knows that there are three personages in the heavens who hold the keys of power, and one presides over all." . . .

. . . .

. . . .

When Joseph walked from the sacred grove, he knew more about God than any other mortal. Others were seeking to learn about the Father and Jesus Christ by reflecting upon passages included in the Bible or by studying the works of countless theologians. Joseph's knowledge was not based on his personal interpretation of the scriptures nor his capacity to reason, but was the result of a direct visitation to him by the Father and the Son. . . . When Joseph emerged from the sacred grove, there was no need for him to argue for a theory — he knew God. [Backman 1980, 131-32, citing HC 5:426 for the sermon quoted (Sunday, June 11, 1843)]

Those are familiar, comforting words. I respect, with fond recollections, Dr. Backman's kindly, unassuming manner when he would stop by my office at the BYU library in the 1970s with lists of publications which he needed us to acquire. Yet there is no way by which I could possibly agree with his anachronistic summary of what Joseph Smith learned in 1820 about the nature of deity. I personally find such a position incompatible with dispassionate analysis of contemporary Mormon texts and collateral theological evidence.

Each reader will naturally consider the deity parallels in this Bibliographic Source by his or her own best light of relevance. Putting aside temptations, however, to succumb merely to personal agendas or modern theological comfort, I think any honest student will concede at least two things: First, that reading the Book of Mormon carefully will not yield any crystal-clear, positively unassailable
doctrine of deity, no matter how hard one tries to work it; and Second, that this ambiguity arises from apparent theological contradictions in the text itself, particularly (I will add) if one closes one's mind to alternative understandings of what the book is trying to say or to avoid.

In this Bibliographic Source, I present most of the Mormon deity parallels from perspectives of what I believe the various early Mormon doctrines of deity were, based upon research and conclusions of Thomas G. Alexander, Boyd Kirkland, Van Hale, Gregory L. Kofford, Dan Vogel, Melody Moench Charles and others. That is not to suggest that these writers would agree with one another upon all points, or with my following summary. I find particularly persuasive, Dan Vogel's textual analysis in Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet, in a number of his segments and notes, none of which should be overlooked, and which can be found in his index under "Book of Mormon, —theology" (Vogel 2004, 700). For a highly valuable, ground-breaking introductory article, see Vogel's "The Earliest Mormon Concept of God," in Bergera, ed., Line Upon Line, pp. 17-33. "Few subjects in Mormonism," declared Vogel in 1989,

have been so affected by continuing revelation as the nature of God. Mormonism began with modalism, switched in the mid-1830s to a binitarian position similar to the Christian Connection, and finally moved in the early 1840s to tritheism. This shift—coupled with the related doctrine that in the universe there is a multitude of gods—eventually brought criticism upon the Mormon prophet from some of his own followers. [Vogel 1989, 28]

The criticism came, in part, because Mormonism's eventual Deities were not the Deity accommodated in the Book of Mormon. Today's Latter-day Saints, accustomed to straightforward, uncomplicated theology, may struggle to find patience for this discussion, so let us reduce the terms for a moment. In a simplistic nutshell,

TRINITARIANS taught one God in three eternal, co-existing parts ("persons") which could operate simultaneously, and of which only one part (Jesus) received a physical body. Examples: Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists.

MODALISTS taught one God, in one part or person at a time, performing various offices, but not simultaneously. God the Father Himself took on a physical body when He was born as the Son (Jesus). He could also manifest Himself as the Holy Spirit. Examples: Ancient Sabellians, likely many theologically unsophisticated but faithful Protestants of young Joseph Smith's culture, the Book of Mormon, "Oneness" Pentecostal or other "Christian Monotheists."

UNITARIANS taught one God only, the unity of God in one personage, the Father. If the Son (Jesus) was wonderful and had a physical body, unlike God, he was nonetheless created (probably in pre-mortal existence), thus not co-eternal with
the Father, and therefore neither a god, nor divine. The Holy Spirit was not a being, but the power or influence of the Father. Examples: Unitarians, many Universalists.

**Binitarians** taught one God only (the Father), with a god-like, literal Son created in pre-mortal existence, and fully divine through that inheritance. Only the Son (as Jesus) had a physical body. The Holy Spirit was an influence rather than a being, operating from the Father through the Son.\[^1\]

Examples: Noah Worcester and those Unitarian-leaning groups which accepted his doctrine, many congregations in the Christian Connection, mid-1830s Mormons.

**Tritheists** would believe in three literal, separate Gods (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each an individual being). Example: modern Mormons.

Notice that in discussions of various doctrines of deity, the term *person*(s) refers generally to functions or offices, as opposed to *personage*(s), which would signify actual, separate and distinct beings. Each of the categories above could vary and carry different shades of meaning. Of all of those labels, I suspect that only "Unitarian" and "Trinitarian" would have been familiar to most ordinary folk of the 1820s and 1830s.

Quite naturally, there were people who held views at every conceivable stage between or beyond anything which we can list in a chart. It would be a mistake for us to presume that all common parishioners adhered completely to - or comprehended fully - what their various denominations or spiritual leaders taught regarding deity. Subtle differences of interpretation crept through every congregation. Many interpretations could have been casual, undisciplined or quietly heretical.

I think we would also be misguided to attempt too precise an understanding of specific transmission of ideas to any individual person. In a recent overview article on "...Early Nineteenth-Century Debates on the Trinity," Clyde D. Ford hesitates to accept Sabellianism (or Modalism) as the Book of Mormon's original view. He argues in large measure from an apparent lack of Sabellian-leaning groups or prominent individuals in Joseph Smith's time or region (Ford, 21-23), and concludes that "...the evidence is not convincing that ancient Sabellianism was an active doctrine of any early nineteenth-century group, including the early Mormons." (Ford, 24). However, a concentrated study of *Mormon Parallels* teaches us to be wary of such assumptions or their implications. It also opens our imaginations to test the astonishing breadth of thought available among even the most humble contemporaries of Joseph Smith. The presence of a Modalist

\[^1\] See Noah Worcester's *Bible News* (MP 482, Part III). In the case of mid-1830s Mormonism, the Holy Spirit still operates from the Father (1835 D&C, p. 54), but as the combined mind of the Father and the Son; see my *Statement on Deity*, point E.
Godhead in the Book of Mormon might depend - not upon any prominent group, or any influential preacher, or some historical treatise or theological dictionary in Joseph Smith's early neighborhood - but merely upon the natural distillation or extraction which everyday variety could have allowed, even subconsciously, in one confused but creative mind.

In his article on "The Earliest Mormon Concept of God," Dan Vogel introduced this original Book of Mormon Godhead. It differed not only from the tritheism of later Mormonism, but also from Trinitarianism or Binitarianism - and certainly from Unitarianism (with its denial of Christ's divinity or literal Atonement). What was left? Vogel's answer was a "... heterodox view of God which theologians refer to as modalism (or Sabellianism)" which saw "... the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as three modes or expressions of the one God. ... Modalism thus differs from orthodox definitions of the Godhead in that it does not distinguish between the 'person' of the Father and the 'person' of the Son." Instead, for Modalists, "the Father not only begets the Son but becomes the Son; Jesus is literally both Son and Father. This position is also sometimes called 'patripassianism,' because the Father in the person of the Son suffers on the cross." (Vogel 1989, 19-20). So if a Trinitarian struggled to explain how one God could operate simultaneously as Father, and as Son, and as Holy Ghost, the Modalist simply saw one God who performed individual offices, but one at a time (consecutively or sequentially, not simultaneously).

In a thorough 1993 examination of "Book of Mormon Christology," Melodie Moench Charles observed that, "Because most contemporary Mormons presume that their unusual tritheistic theology describes reality accurately[,] and because they presume that the Book of Mormon describes reality accurately, the Book of Mormon's doctrine that the Son and the Father are one is misunderstood and misrepresented." (Charles, 108). For full investigation of this genuinely significant topic, I recommend Charles' entire article. She generally concurs with Vogel's attribution of Modalism to the Book of Mormon Deity, and presents powerful reasoning and extensive scripture analysis established within a sophisticated historical/theological setting.

We read explanations, certainly, from traditional defenders who analyze how the Book of Mormon's Godhead could be the same as the one described in Mormonism's later twentieth-century. For these writers, the Godhead of the Nephites was no different from the Godhead described in Mormon teachings today. Notice, however, how hard such writers work to get where they want to go. They seem to trudge determinedly through phrases and verses where the familiar modern doctrines seem unfairly hidden and confused – confused in a Book, ironically, which was written to restore "plain and precious"
truths needed desperately by an 1820s world suffering too much already from lack of clarity and doctrine directly revealed.

In a splendidly written, sometimes brilliant chapter on the "Plain and Precious Truths" of the Book of Mormon, Terryl L. Givens comes to a conclusion with which I will differ here. Dr. Givens traces the apparently conflicting characterizations of deity which occur throughout the Book of Mormon, then refers to the early twentieth-century official LDS Church remedy of "divine investiture": "The Father placed His name upon the Son; and Jesus Christ spoke and ministered in and through the Father's name; and so far as power, authority, and Godship are concerned His words and acts were and are those of the Father." Givens then concludes:

This Mormon theology that avoids trinitarianism by imputing to any member of the godhead authority to speak for another may be too convenient for skeptics. But the "modalism" Melodie Moench Charles and Clyde Forsberg impute to the Book of Mormon (the belief that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three labels for three functions or modes pertaining to one God) has clear deficiencies of its own, Mormons are quick to point out. It fails utterly to account for a scene like Christ's baptism, or his descent in 3 Nephi, where he appears bodily even as the voice of the Father announces him. It will not do to simply aver that "Book of Mormon authors saw Christ and his Father as one God who manifested himself in different ways." . . . Like the New Testament, Mormon's record shows us an incarnate Christ who prays to the Father, a son introduced by the heavenly voice of the Father, and a Christ who refers to his own heavenly Father throughout the course of a mortal ministry. Charles insists that those episodes are theologically less determinative than scriptural, verbal reference to the Father and Son's oneness. Given Christ's plea in his intercessory prayer that his apostles "may be one, even as we are one" (John 17), her logic is less than compelling.

[Givens, 201, quoting in this paragraph from Charles, 98-99]

If rendered less glaring in Dr. Givens' somewhat mathematical approach, the problem will not go away. The Book of Mormon's expressions of deity are simply not consistent enough to supply modern Mormonism's expectations of utter clarity or tangible theology. But neither was Joseph Smith consistent throughout his life, as scholars demonstrate easily, and as I echo below. If we will not presuppose a modern Mormon perspective, but listen instead to the Book of Mormon's words, we may recognize individual bits of language which have satisfied either Trinitarians, or Unitarians, Binitarians, Modalists or almost any other Christian polemicists who have wrestled with Godhead since the New Testament came together.

Dan Vogel points out that in the Book of Mormon, "...—the voice of the Father introducing the Son, the subjection of the Son unto the Father, the Son ascending to the Father (3 Ne[phi]. 11:6-8, 32; 15:1, 18-19; 18:27; 26:2, 5, 15) — all have
And did those references make every Christian believe in the same kind of
Godhead throughout history? If ". . . such passages never dissuaded modalists"
elsewhere, then ". . . the presence of apparent contradictions does not necessarily
detract from a modalistic interpretation" in the Book of Mormon itself
(Vogel 1989, 24).

In modern Mormon culture, we flatter ourselves too often that only we have
found, only we have understood those New Testament verses which appear to
show that God and Christ are separate beings. Yet, a thousand Trinitarian angels
have danced comfortably upon the head of that same pin since the medieval
curch and before, joyfully chanting the same biblical lines which appear in
Mormon arguments - or in the Book of Mormon itself. For powerful examples of
how easily Christ could pray to His Father in passages sung by Trinitarians who
continued to enjoy their own version of one God in three "persons," consider as
merely one example in this bibliography, Joshua Smith's compilation of Divine
Hymns (MP 403). For a demonstration of similar Trinitarian comfort in preaching
all these things, see MP 469 (Whitman).

In her detailed examination of "Book of Mormon Christology," Charles allows
that the Book of Mormon's deity is not perfectly explained. Can we not all
chuckle together appreciatively when she speaks, surely, for any Latter-day Saint
seminary student, any Mormon missionary – indeed any General Authority of
the Church who might try methodically to learn the exact nature of God from

Although modalism is the best description for Book of Mormon theology
generally, it is not apt in every instance. Furthermore, there is no reason to
believe that Book of Mormon authors were intentionally constructing a theology
that would fit any previous or future model or label. Nor did they seem
concerned about making sure that the theology of any one part of the book was
always consistent with the theology of other parts. [Charles, 100]

Seeking to reconcile such perplexing parts, Ronald V. Huggins proposes a dif-
ferent kind of Modalism for the Book of Mormon (in his Internet article, "Joseph
Smith's Modalism: Sabellian Sequentialism or Swedenborgian Expansionism?").
Yes, explains Huggins, the God of the Nephites was indeed only one, but One
who, in entering the body of Jesus, operated rather like (and he states this
respectfully) a branch office: a God somewhat apart, who had to struggle within
His mortal component to satisfy and get back to Himself. In other words,
a Modalism which was not restricted to sequential operations or persons, but
which was expansionistic, as needed (Huggins, five and two paragraphs,
respectively, before his footnote 7 reference). I would recommend this article for
the fresh and competent background which Dr. Huggins offers to these issues
from his perspective as a non-Mormon theologian. What I share less, however, is Huggins' inclination to resolve completely (or to trace in Swedenborgian influences) tensions about the nature of God which I doubt were settled entirely in Joseph Smith's own mind while he dictated the Book of Mormon.

During the past quarter-century, I have read so much early nineteenth-century debate and exegesis on the nature of God(s) - from many theologians at various cultural levels - that I will now insist here with some authority that the evident Book of Mormon inconsistencies fit comfortably into the time and place where they were dictated. Everyone has the same Bible, rhetorically speaking, yet in it are discovered many different Godheads. The tedious, pre-Mormon works analyzed in this bibliography which debate the nature of deity have been perfectly maddening to read. One might prefer to crash one's arm against the door frame, if only to relieve the cerebral pain. Impatient Unitarians, Inbetweenarians and inflexible Trinitarians all asserted their doctrines in presence of the same, contradictory chapters and verse. It was only an improvement for Joseph Smith to accommodate those confusing passages with a Modalistic Godhead which was, at least chronologically, rather more comfortably divisible and comprehensible.

In short, I think that the Book of Mormon's God was indeed Modalist: one being, a spirit or essence whose physical manifestation in the form of the Son was, during His ministry, the one and only God, present right here among mankind. (The Holy Ghost does not become a being or a separate personage until 1841. See Hale 2006, 48-49; compare to "Section II. Past Mormon Views," below, points E, H.) This was not the modern Mormon Godhead, nor was it a Trinitarian God operating everywhere in three different functions at the same time. As Dan Vogel explains convincingly, I believe,

> Passages which speak of the Father sending the Son (Al[ma]. 14:5; 3 Ne[phi]. 27:13-14; 26:5) do not necessarily support a trinitarian view and should be understood in light of Ether 4:12: "He that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me. Behold, I am the Father." In other words, Jesus as the Father sent himself into the world to redeem his people. Nor do passages which speak of the Son being prepared from before the foundation of the earth (Mos[iah] 18:13) necessarily imply two persons existing before the incarnation. Consider the following: "I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son" (Eth[er]. 3:14). The Book of Mormon therefore violates a major tenet of trinitarianism by confusing the persons of the Father and Son and by referring to Jesus as the Father. [Vogel 1989, 22]
NOTHING IN JOSEPH SMITH'S WORLD proved one theory of deity over another. As Joseph dictated the Book of Mormon, there was nothing in his Bible which could not be interpreted in various ways. But why would God (the Son) have prayed to Himself (the Father)? In the book of 3 Nephi, as Melodie Moench Charles points out, Jesus clearly instructed the Nephites to pray to the Father, all the while encouraging them while they prayed directly to Him, the Son who stood before them there (Charles, 101. See particularly 3 Nephi 18:19-20 as contrasted by 3 Nephi 19:7, 18, 26, where the Nephites call on the Father in Christ's name at one moment, and then "pray unto Jesus, calling him their Lord and their God," after which Jesus encourages them: "Pray on."{162} Charles explains the original underlying theological conundrum in broad historical context:

... when [ancient] Jewish Christians began to understand Jesus as a divine being, they either had to abandon monotheism to accommodate the notion of a second god or they had to redefine God so that he could be a human living on earth while also living in heaven as the divine father of that human. If Jesus and his father (and perhaps the Holy Spirit) were all gods, how many gods were there? Was Jesus a god separate and distinct from his father, was he one aspect of his father, or was he his father acting in one of a number of roles? Could he have been both human and divine? Was he one of God's creatures as mere mortals were, or was he pre-existent, without a beginning, just as God was? Answering these questions has occupied Christian theologians and churches from New Testament times to the present. [Charles, 96]

DID THE BOOK OF MORMON FAIL, then, in its promise to restore "the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb" (1 Nephi 13:34)? By no means, at least insofar as that gospel was conceived by Joseph Smith in mid-1829. Part of the problem was that Joseph's surprising talents did not always include an ability to articulate concepts in a concise manner. Consider the revelation excusing the omission of the 116 purloined pages of Book of Mormon text, for example (D&C 10:10-19, 29-32) – surely not the precise words or entire logic of any Creator of worlds. However plain and precious, Joseph's thoughts assumed formation more like a casual country militia than any regimented brigade. "In conversation he was slow," recalled a resident of Liberty, Missouri, "and used too many words to express his ideas, and would not generally go directly to a point."{163} The Book of Mormon falls short of many plain or expanded doctrines.

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{162} Meanwhile, as Charles notes and as Givens emphasizes above, Jesus turns and prays to His Father. The language of the praying Christ appeals to modern Latter-day Saints. But similar language appears in John 17, available to people of much different persuasions throughout history who have interpreted it differently, since this is not the only kind of passage which must be accommodated by a comprehensive doctrine of deity.

now taught by the various "Mormon" churches. Yet the Book does likely contain all the gospel which Joseph Smith had at the time.

For all its rambling, the Book of Mormon was still capable of stating doctrine categorically and overtly when it felt the need. Consider the Book’s very plain and pointed rejection of infant baptism, for example, and its equally clear scriptural argument against Universalism (see, respectively, MP 61, Blanchard, and MP 40, Ballou, *Treatise on Atonement*). So if, in 1829, the Book of Mormon had wanted to warn us that the Father and the Son are two absolutely distinct, separate beings in the physical sense, it certainly would have done so - but it did not. Indeed, if there is any renunciation there at all, it is directed against Unitarians and all others who would deny the absolute divinity of Christ.

It is not that the Book of Mormon lacks a theological position on the subject, but that it refuses to say what some people want it to say. Observe, instead, where the Book directs its wrath. Does it focus upon any good-hearted Christian who might misconstrue the composition of the Godhead, or does it rage against false teachers who deny that Christ shall come at all, or save His people? The Book is not nearly so much anti-Trinitarian, as it is intensely reactionary against Unitarian innovations. When the Book of Mormon underscores an utter (and divinely non-Unitarian) unity of the Godhead, it does so with fervor, but more importantly, it does so to support Salvation. Ambiguity of persons in the Godhead is not the Book’s first concern. It worries most and foremost about those baneful, worldly doctrines which hold that the Son of God is not divine, that He shall not effect an essential, a full, an infinite Atonement.

Insofar as it was able, the Book of Mormon would sort through corrupted traditions of the past and misleading remedies of a modern age. It would restore supposedly simple, straightforward truths which no one else seemed to grasp. "[B]ehold I am the Lord of glory," Joseph would later report (from the mouth of the single Deity Who he said had once appeared to him): "I was crucifyed for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life  behold the world lieth in sin . . . at this time and none doeth good  no not one . . ."\(^{164}\) Even the more comfortable western New York State Unitarian-leaning theology of the Christian Connection (which allowed for a divine Christ) probably did not impress Joseph Smith in the 1820s so much as more elementary reflections like that from young John Colby (MP 102) who simply wanted to love God, and be accepted by Him. Sounding as Modalist as Trinitarian, that exemplary Baptist boy-preacher who inspired David Marks (and, I’ll wager, young Joseph Smith) kept things uncomplicated, if somewhat undefined; see Colby’s words at the end of this introductory section, below.

\(^{164}\) Joseph Smith Letterbook I, p. 3. See point C of my Statement on Deity below for full citation and text.
If one finds courage to slog through Joseph Smith’s tedious verbiage which can occur in many Restoration texts, the original meaning and intent usually become clear eventually – if subject to modification which may follow in Joseph’s subsequent teachings. But how are we to resolve his frustrating blend of disparate deity references within a very few months of 1829? Honestly, I have to think that some of those passages crept into the Book of Mormon from the Bible, without entire reconciliation with Joseph’s personal view of God at the time. Notice carefully that where modern Saints discover the present Mormon Godhead, the content is most often incidental, in the sense that it narrates incidents, events, actions intended to be consistent with (even when surpassing) parallel Bible events: the voice of the Father proclaiming the Son, the Son speaking of the Father, the Son praying to the Father, or ascending to Him: categories of events known, taught and accommodated by Old and New World Christians of every persuasion for two thousand years.165

"It is not surprising," observes Ronald Huggins,

that passages like these have been pointed to by those who deny that the Father and the Son are a single divine person in the Book of Mormon.

But those who do, do so incautiously since wherever the Book of Mormon pauses to give clarification as to how such passages are to be understood, its clarification runs along modalistic lines. [Huggins, paragraphs preceding his footnote 5 reference]

In the clarifying phrases where the Book of Mormon text allows either deity or Nephite prophets to proclaim God’s nature in theological statements, I think the meaning is simple and uncomplicated if we will stop trying to force it to sound like twentieth-century Mormonism. The highest purpose of the golden plates, surely, was to convince Joseph Smith’s generation "that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD . . ." (Book of Mormon title page, emphasis in the original). When the 1829 text goes beyond the incidents or events surrounding deity, and actually describes deity instead, the most plain and direct meaning of its words is the same. Wherever the Book of Mormon makes actual theological statements about the nature of God, it is powerful.

The Lord of the Book of Mormon is most consistent when allowed to speak for Himself, or through His unpretentious Book of Mormon advocates: "I am the

165 If the event of the voice audibly proclaiming "my Beloved Son" is more dramatic in the Book of Mormon than in the New Testament, one may notice nonetheless that the voice is heard in the American account before Jesus is actually seen in the sky, descending to the Nephites (3 Nephi 11:3-8). This allows for a somewhat ethereal Father stage of deity to proclaim the embodied Son stage without requiring literal separation of personages. While it might be nice to imagine that I were offering fresh insight here, I see that Dr. Ronald Huggins pointed out this and other examples in 2004, observing that "... the book of Mormon actually avoids describing 'two or more members of the Godhead manifesting themselves at the same time,' at least in cases where the two persons are the Father and the Son." (Huggins, paragraphs following his footnote 6 reference)
Father and the Son... Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image?" (Ether 3:14-15); "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (3 Nephi 9:15). When a contentious debater tries to trap Amulek (a newly-religious Nephite teacher), he begins by asking, "Is there more than one God?" Amulek answers that an angel has taught him that there is but one God, and the Son of God shall come to redeem His people who repent. The critic tries again: "Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father?" A Mormon today would answer, "No, He is not the Eternal Father Himself, but His Son." But in 1829, Amulek could answer without hesitation: "Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth, and all things which in them are; he is the beginning and the end, the first and the last;...," Alma 11:28-39.

Notice the irony! Out of a thousand and more years of civilization - from among what should have been countless religious disputes - why would the Book of Mormon choose to include this brief theological skirmish with a novice preacher? Was it to teach us about the composition of godhead, or to affirm that Christ would certainly come? A modern Latter-day Saint must hang upon Amulek's answers, waiting eagerly for the familiar doctrine to emerge, that the Father and the Son are two separate beings, if one in purpose (or to suit James E. Talmage at the turn of the twentieth century, that the Son was the Father's representative on earth, invested with full divinity and power to act in God's name). Anxious for such clarification, today's Saint may at first welcome the question posed to Amulek. Was God's Son also "the very Eternal Father?"

Anticipating that the Book of Mormon presents this challenge for high purpose, our present Mormon reader may feel suddenly unfulfilled by Amulek's answer. Yet the reason for promoting the issue was noble indeed, in Book of Mormon eyes. The plain and precious question - and Amulek's straightforward reply - were designed to proclaim Christ—come, fully divine: the one, the only, very eternal God Who would be able to effect an infinite Atonement for mankind. "Knowest thou the condescension of God?", exclaims the angel to Nephi viewing the babe in Mary's arms: "... behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!" (1830 Book of Mormon, p. 25; now altered in 1 Nephi 11:16, 21). For the Book of Mormon, the Christ-child was our Heavenly Father Himself, and His amazing condescension was not to send His Son, but rather, to become the Son, "... Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son;" (Mormon 9:12) as clarified so explicitly by the prophet Abinadi:

... I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—

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166—except in the sense of sending Himself.
The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—

And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.

And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people.

[Mosiah 15:1-5]

Those are intent words indeed, eager to make us understand the wonder of Salvation. They are among the first passages which Joseph Smith dictated to Oliver Cowdery for the Book of Mormon. But they are not words calculated to restore some ancient clarification that God and Jesus are two separate beings - utterly distinct, separate physical personages: two different divine people. Instead, the terms of this passage are as ardent to the contrary as any "plain" or "precious" human language could devise. "Teach them," urged Abinadi, in the closing sentence of his final sermon before he was martyred: "Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father. Amen." (Mosiah 16:15). "And we know that if we are faithful in Christ," agreed the Book of Mormon's "Three Witnesses" in 1829,

we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen." [Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris (text composed by Joseph Smith), printed at the front or back of all editions of the Book of Mormon. Similar references to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, "which is [or, are] one God" occur in 2 Nephi 31:21 and Mormon 7:7.]

Amulek promised that after a universal resurrection, all ". . . shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, . . .," Alma 11:44. Ammon was content enough to explain the nature of God to King Lamoni as ". . . a Great Spirit . . . This is God. And . . . this Great Spirit, who is God, created all things which are in heaven and in the earth . . ." (Alma 18:26, 28. The full text is in dialogue with questions and answers, but I have preserved the doctrinal intent.) Aaron, son of Mosiah, continued Ammon's preaching by explaining the eternal plan to Lamoni's father . . .

And the king said: Is God that Great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem?

And Aaron said unto him: Yea, he is that Great Spirit, and he created all things both in heaven and in earth. [Alma 22:9-10]

167 See MP 350 (Reynolds Arcade), section headed, "Joseph Smith in Rochester."
Now, of course a modern defender may strain such a text to explain that Aaron’s "Great Spirit" Creator was actually Christ, who was still a spirit then, prior to His mortal birth. But why would the plain and precious Book of Mormon text want to confuse us by also repeatedly calling Him "God" and "the very Eternal Father"? Confusion was never the Book's intent. If it was God, the very Eternal Father who had created the world, that was no problem in a Book of Mormon where God and Christ were one spirit, later to become one Savior with a mortal body on earth.

The doctrinal error of the Zoramites (a few years later, before the birth of the Savior) was not to believe that God was then a spirit, but to claim that He would ever remain so, never to enter the body of Jesus to redeem the world (Alma 31:15-16). That is why, much earlier, when the brother of Jared beheld "the Lord" in vision, no distinction was made between the Father and the Son. The man of surpassing faith had beheld "the finger of the Lord," "the finger of Jesus," - indeed His entire spirit body which would one day become flesh. The brother of Jared did not behold two personages in 1829 (any more than did Joseph Smith in 1832) because in the mind of the narrator, these were One. Each man saw the "Lord." "I am the Father and the Son." (Ether 3; for phrases quoted here, see in that order, verses 6, 19, 14. For Joseph Smith's 1832 account, see point C in "Past Modern Views," below.)

". . . I must express my surprise and grief," wrote a young Baptist minister regarding controversy which had intensified since Noah Worcester's doctrine appeared,

in witnessing the declaration and progression of the war in New-England, declared and carried on by the professed ministers of the gospel. One important point of the dispute, appears to be [Colby, p. 314 ends] relating to the Trinity. It is a pity there should be so much contention about that which is not in the bible. What profit would it be for me to write volumes, to prove that snow, ice, and water, are one? Or, on the other hand, that water existed before ice; or that snow was of a more recent date? Or what advantage would the Christian world derive, from my calling their attention, by publishing pamphlet after pamphlet, to prove that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one? or that the Son is equal with the Father, that he is very [sic] God, &c. ? Christ said, when on earth, I and my Father are one; he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also. I in him, and he in me, &c. That all men should worship the Son, even as they worship the Father; for he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, &c. Or, on the other hand, to prove that the Son is not equal with the Father, and so give the dimensions of Christ, as though we could bound, limit, fathom, or comprehend the dear Redeemer? We ought to remember, that we cannot comprehend ourselves, much less the exalted Son of God. [John Colby (MP 102), 314-15]
Those comments were published by David Marks in Rochester, New York, the same year that Joseph Smith reported obtaining the golden plates of the Book of Mormon. Joseph cannot be shown tangibly - in real, known records or verifiable texts - to have mentioned, discussed or owned any personal visionary experience which revealed a separation of Father and Son into two separate beings until at least the mid-1830s (see points C and F, below). The careful student of early Mormon history will notice that in broadest terms, as Joseph Smith's concepts of the Godhead evolved and then became increasingly assertive (if never utterly consistent; Hale 2006, 50), so did the various descriptions of his first vision.

To distinguish the early Mormon concepts of deity from the modern views enumerated further above, I label the following points or sections with letters instead of numbers.

II. PAST MORMON VIEWS

A. While dictating the Book of Mormon in 1829, Joseph Smith seems to have believed in one, single God acting in various consecutive (or sequential) modes: Father in heaven, then Son/Father (Jesus) upon the earth, then the one God in heaven again, manifesting Himself as, by or through the Holy Spirit/Holy Ghost.  

168 See my introductory discussion above, headed “Diety in the Book of Mormon.” Some Book of Mormon passages may seem to contradict this Modalist idea of the Godhead, but other passages present powerful challenges to modern Mormon concepts. The Book’s very title page proclaimed that, “. . . JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD . . . ,” emphasis in the original. The first chapter of Joseph Smith’s Book of Moses dictation, three months after the Book of Mormon was published, offered similar doctrine: “And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior, for he is full of grace and truth; but there is no God beside me, and all things are present with me, for I know them all.” Moses 1:6 (June 1830). Why is Moses in the similitude of the Son, yet not also mentioned as being in the similitude of the only God beside Whom there is no other? Because God (the Father) will be physically embodied only in the Son - they are literally one. In March 1830, Joseph Smith had dictated a text in which Jesus, the Redeemer, speaks as ”. . . myself, even God, the greatest of all . . . ,” who stipulates: ”Nevertheless, glory be to the Father,” D&C 19:18, 19.

For many Americans of the 1830s, as throughout much of Christian history, the Son constituted the only physical embodiment of a somewhat indefinable, rather ethereal but eternal, perhaps spirit, God (see, for example, MP 339, Priest, The Anti-Universalist, section headed, “A Convocation in Heaven . . .”). Hence the great emphasis in some contemporary and Book of Mormon texts on the condensation of God, deigning to take a humble, physical body like ours: see MP 397 (Ethan Smith, Treatise on the Character of Jesus Christ, section headed “The Condescension of God”).

Meanwhile, many plain, straightforward Christian folk of Joseph Smith's world required a deity which was easier to comprehend, so they took it for granted that God and Jesus were two different Beings (MP 487, Thomas Worcester, A Defence of Truth . . . , section headed "Four Out of Five Ordinary People Believe . . ."). The second edition of the Book of Mormon (1837) showed changes in wording (in 1 Nephi; Charles, 107-8) to allow Jesus to be the Son separate from God the Father. The contrary wordings in the 1830 edition had been so specific, however, and so consistent with similar passages elsewhere in the Book which were never changed, that they were hardly accidentally mis-statements of dictation.

Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source © 2008 Rick Grunder
B. Early non-Mormon (and some Mormon) observers of this earliest period over-simplified what they read, and presumed that the Book of Mormon's God was outright Trinitarian. However, Trinitarians would generally object to the apparent Book of Mormon concept of a single God operating sequentially in only one mode at a time, or Christ calling Himself the Father. And, Joseph Smith would have seen his concepts at odds with Trinitarians, Unitarians, and most other views. Most importantly, the Book of Mormon was not so much concerned with clarifying the composition of the Godhead as it was reactionary against Unitarian or other innovations which denied the divinity of Christ.

C. Nearly every day for several weeks in the spring of 1832, Joseph Smith retired to a grove of trees in southern Indiana where he could be alone. He prayed, meditated and wept at the thought of the adversary's influence upon him in times past. He emerged from these experiences triumphant, declaring that "... God is merciful and has forgiven my Sins and I rejoice that he Sendeth forth the Comforter unto as many as believe and humbleth themselves before him..." (Letter to Emma Smith in Joseph's handwriting [spelling retained], Greenville, Indiana, 6 June 1832. Original manuscript at the Chicago Historical Society, transcribed with commentary and illustrations in Joseph Smith Writings, 263-68; text above quoted from p. 264. For historical explanation of the Indiana setting, see Joseph Smith Writings, 263, and MP 296, Otis.)

By November (1832), Joseph had recorded the earliest known account of his first vision. It is written in his own hand. It mentions the appearance of one being only, "the Lord of glory" who was crucified for the sins of the world and who would come again, "clothed in the glory of my Father..." In relation to point A above, this would also be God the Father, of Whom Jesus is seen as the physical embodiment, as "the Son":

... and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of my age a pillar of fire light above the...
brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of god and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying Joseph my son thy sins are forgiven thee. go thy way walk in my statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucifyed for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life behold the world lieth in sin and at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned aside from the gospel and keep not my commandments they draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to their ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and Apostles behold and lo I come quickly as it is written of me in the cloud clothed in the glory of my Father and my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy and the Lord was with me but could find none that would believe the heavenly vision nevertheless I pondered these things in my heart.

[Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, p. 3, reproduced in Selected Collections 1:20; LDS Church History Library call number: MS 155, Box 2, Folder 1 (handwriting of Joseph Smith). Also reproduced in Joseph Smith Writings, 17 (with Dean Jessee’s technical transcription, pp. 11-12). Transcription also available in Joseph Smith Papers 1:6-7.]

Notice that the being does not necessarily come down out of heaven in this earliest narrative, but commune with Joseph, upon whom "the heavens" are "opened"; cf. D&C 1:17. Compare and contrast with Lehi’s first visions in the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 1.

D. After May 1833, "...it appears that... Joseph never again referred to Jesus as the Father in any of his writings." (Kirkland, 37). "After 1833," agrees Melodie Moench Charles, there is no clear example of this phenomenon of blending the identities and functions of deity in any revelation coming through Joseph Smith, probably because he began to see the members of the godhead as separate." (Charles, 106, citing personal communication with Brent Lee Metcalfe in August 1990)

E. In the winter of 1834-35, "Lecture Fifth. Of Faith." (part of the series commonly called the "Lectures on Faith") was delivered by unspecified persons in "a THEOLOGICAL class" at Kirtland, Ohio (Messenger and Advocate 1:8 [May 1835], p. 122). According to Dr. Larry E. Dahl, these lectures were probably delivered prior to December 22, 1834.170 "Delivered before the school of the elders in Kirtland," explains Dr. Peter Crawley,

170 Dahl, 12-13, based on known collateral events. Dr. Dahl also provides the following conclusions about the lectures which are of tremendous relevance here: "It is clear that several of the brethren participated in writing them. It is also clear that Joseph Smith and perhaps others prepared them for publication after they were written. Undoubtedly, the Lectures were, in the words of President John Taylor, 'published with the
these lectures cover such basic doctrines as the necessity of faith; the attributes of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost; man’s relationship with God; and the nature of salvation. Exactly who wrote them is not completely clear. Alan Phipps, in a statistical study, concludes that they were mainly written by Sidney Rigdon, with Lecture Five and parts of some of the others written by Joseph Smith. The “Lectures on Faith” were included in the various LDS editions of the Doctrine and Covenants until 1921. [Crawley 22 (p. 56, citing on p. 384 n. 6: “Alan J. Phipps, ‘The Lectures on Faith: An Authorship Study’ (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1977).”]

The fifth Lecture defined "the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things—by whom all things were created and made, . . . whether in heaven, on earth, . . . or throughout the immensity of space" as "two personages":

—They are the Father and the Son: The Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power: possessing all perfection and fulness: The Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, . . . man was formed after his likeness, and in his image;—he is also the express image and likeness of the personage of the Father: possessing all the fulness of the Father, or, the same fulness with the Father; being begotten of him, and was ordained from before the foundation of the world to be a propitiation for the sins of all those who should believe on his name, and is called the Son because of the flesh . . .

[Messenger and Advocate 1:8 (May 1835), 122; 1835 D&C, p. 53 (reading, "... the same fulness with the Father; [sic] . . .")]

The Holy Ghost was still not a personage at this point, but the combined mind of the Father and the Son:

And . . . the only begotten of the Father, . . . having overcome, received a fulness of the glory of the Father—possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit, that bears record of the Father and the Son, and these three are one, or in other words, these three constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things: by whom all things were created and made, . . . and these three constitute the Godhead, and are one: The Father and the Son possessing the same mind, the same wisdom, glory, power and fulness: Filling all in all—the Son being filled with the fulness of the Mind, glory and power, or, in other words, the Spirit, glory and power of the Father . . . sitting at the right hand of power, in the express image and likeness of the Father—a Mediator for man—being filled with the fulness of the mind of the

sanction and approval of the Prophet Joseph Smith’ (Woodford 1:87). It would therefore seem appropriate to attribute the ideas, principles, and doctrines in the Lectures on Faith to the Prophet Joseph.” (p. 10); "In answer then to the questions of who delivered the Lectures to whom, when, where, and why, I would say they were delivered by the presiding officers of the Church and some of the elders themselves to a School for the Elders, in the printing office in Kirtland, during November and December 1834, for the purpose of preparing the elders to be effective missionaries.” (p. 13). Copied from Infobases 1997 CD-ROM; not verified against hard copy.
Father, or, in other words, the Spirit of the Father: which Spirit is shed forth upon all who believe on his name and keep his commandments . . . [Messenger and Advocate 1:8 (May 1835), 123; 1835 D&C, pp. 53-54. Both passages quoted above are identical, down to exact punctuation, in both sources.]

For readers who wish to pursue a deeper analysis, there is still more there, to the same effect. Regarding the range of "... Joseph Smith’s teachings about the Holy Ghost," see Hale 2006, 47-51, showing Joseph first portraying the Holy Ghost as a personage in 1841. Whatever the Lectures on Faith lost for want of economy of words was perhaps compensated by vague flexibility and curious persistence. In the Preface to the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams mentioned the Lectures specifically, explaining that, "... in consequence of their embracing the important doctrine of salvation, we have arranged them into the following work." These men concluded their remarks with a striking statement of their "expectation" in regard to their responsibility for "this little volume . . . that we are to be called to answer to every principle advanced, in that day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed, and the reward of every man's labor be given him." (1835 D&C, pp. iii, iv, dated Kirtland, Ohio, February 17, 1835)

F. On November 9, 1835, Joseph Smith recounted his first vision to "Joshua the Jewish Minister" (Robert Matthews in disguise, about whom, begin with MP 420, Stone), stating that two personages had appeared, the second, "like unto the first, he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee, he testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; <and I saw many angels in this vision> . . ." The text does not state positively that these various beings included the Father or the Son. The earliest record is manuscript, dictated by Joseph Smith to his clerk Warren Parrish under date of November 9, 1835 (Jessee, 7-8, citing: "Joseph Smith Journal, 1835–36, MS, 23–24, Church Archives," Jessee, 31 n. 11; also transcribed in Joseph Smith Writings, 104-5).

Five days later, Joseph related his history to another visitor, Erastus Holmes from Clermont County in southwestern Ohio. That narrative was even more vague regarding heavenly beings in the first vision, referring only to "... the first visitation of Angels which was when I was about 14. years old . . ." (Jessee, 10, citing: "Joseph Smith Journal, November 14, 1835," Jessee, 31 n. 15; also transcribed in Joseph Smith Writings, 112–13.

G. 1838-1839. The final, highly expanded version of Joseph Smith’s first vision (the present familiar "Joseph Smith story") describes the appearance of two distinct and separate beings in early spring, 1820. It is canonized in the Pearl of Great Price as part of Joseph Smith—History, with the crucial portion of verse 17 reading thus:
When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*

While there is the strongest intimation here that these were God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, the ensuing text refers to the beings consistently only as personages, without elaborating further upon their nature or their identity. However, the Beloved Son paraphrases Isaiah 29:13 and other passages to say that the sects of Joseph Smith's time "... draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, ...," etc. (Joseph Smith—History 1:19)

Nothing is suggested regarding the compositions of these personages' spirits or bodies. No mention is made of the Holy Spirit. So while this may be among the most important or dramatic scriptures of Mormonism, it offers less commentary on the actual nature of deity than many readers infer from it based upon concepts actually derived from other Mormon sources.

The earliest record is a June 1839 manuscript dictated near Commerce, Illinois by Joseph Smith to clerk James Mulholland, presumably based upon some manuscript of dictation by Joseph Smith to secretary George W. Robinson at Far West, Missouri at the end of April and beginning of May 1838 (Jessee, 11, 31-32 n. 19). The relevant passage reads the same as presently published (above, differing only in punctuation):

> When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of <them> spake unto me calling me by name and said (pointing to the other) "This is my beloved Son, Hear him." [Jessee, 15, citing: "Smith, 'History of the Church,' A-1," p. 3; also transcribed in Joseph Smith *Writings*, 230]

The first publication of this 1838-39 text was in the *Times and Seasons* 3:11 (April 1, 1842), p. 748, with only slight punctuation differences from the manuscript. For various accounts of Joseph Smith's first vision as they evolved 1832-44, see Jessee, with some analysis. For more structured comparative analysis but with fewer accounts, see Howard.

**H.** On February 16, 1841, "... Joseph said Concerning the Godhead it was Not as many imagined—three Heads & but one body, he said the three were separate bodys—God the first & Jesus the Mediator the 2d & the Holy Ghost & these three agree in one & this is the manner we Should aproach God in order to get his blessings . . ." (at a meeting of the Nauvoo Lyceum group, William P. McIntire minute book, in Joseph Smith *Words*, 63 [stating, "McIntire's Minute Book is in the Church Archives." *Words*, 85 n. 14]).
I. About September 1842, a clergyman reported his conversation with Joseph Smith in Nauvoo to a newspaper which was quoted in the *Times and Seasons*, then under official editorship of Joseph Smith himself. The editor (whether Smith or an assistant editor) then cited a portion of doctrine from the Lectures on Faith. "He . . . asked me—" began the anonymous minister in this portion of his quoted report,

[Smith:] What is the fundamental doctrine of your faith?’ [minister:] 'The unity of God— one God in one person.' [Smith:] 'We don't agree with you. We believe in three Gods. There are three personages in Heaven— all equal in power and glory, but they are not one God.’ [minister, commenting:] I suppose, from what I heard, that Smith makes it a point not to agree with any one in regard to his religious opinions, and adapts himself to the person with whom he happens to be talking for the time being.”

[Times and Seasons editor; Smith himself?:] Tolerable fair:— Though the idea that Joseph Smith adapts his conversation to the company, is an error. Joseph Smith opposes vice and error, and supports his positions from revelation: no odds whether there be two, three, or "Gods many." The Father, and the Son are persons of Tabernacle; and the Holy Ghost a spirit, besides the sons of God: for the scriptures say: "Ye are Gods.” [Times and Seasons 3:22 (September 15, 1842), p. 926]

Without having further information, my personal instincts based upon usage of the period suggest that this is Smith himself speaking in the editorial reply. Otherwise, the second (at least) reference to his name above might more likely have been a title and the surname only, such as "Gen. Smith." I also think some other editor would not have taken it upon himself to respond, in good humor as above, "Tolerable fair:" That expression would most appropriately be conceded by Smith himself in such a context. It suggests that Smith allows that the minister has reported the conversation in a tolerably accurate manner. Another editor might not know what Smith had actually said to the minister, whereas whoever writes the response above seems to agree with the minister's report. The entire response is theologically aggressive to a degree which I doubt another editor would presume to undertake while Smith was, editorially, so close at hand.


19. And I heard a great voice, bearing record from heav'n,
   He’s the Saviour, the only begotten of God — [p. 82 ends]
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,
   Even all that career in the heavens so broad,

20. Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,
   Are sav’d by the very same Saviour of ours;
And, of course, are begotten God’s daughters and sons,
By the very same truths, and the very same pow’rs.

[Times and Seasons 4:6 (February 1, 1843), pp. 82-83; signed in type at the end, p. 85, "JOSEPH SMITH. Nauvoo, Feb. 1843." The actual verse composition of Joseph’s explanations may have been assisted by Phelps himself.]


The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us. [HC 5:325 (now D&C 130:22). Headings above given on pp. 323 and 325, respectively]

Joseph Smith had intended to travel to Carthage, Illinois that afternoon. However, because of bad weather, he called another meeting in Ramus for seven o’clock that evening (as explained on the same page, HC 5:325), at which he made the important declaration quoted above, now canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants.


I wish to declare I have always [sic] and in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods. It has been preached by the Elders for fifteen years.

I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods. If this is in accordance with the New Testament, lo and behold! we have three Gods anyhow, and they are plural: and who can contradict it? [HC 6:474]

Despite such absolutist tones at the end of Joseph Smith’s life, Van Hale points quite justifiably to " . . . Joseph’s expectation and toleration, and even responsibility, for diversity among the Saints, even upon a subject of considerable significance to him." The King Follett Discourse (April 7, 1844), followed by Joseph’s final address (June 16, above), followed by Joseph’s personally-approved re-publication of the Lectures on Faith in the second-edition Doctrine and Covenants (completed ca. August 1844; Crawley, p. 279)—these each offered different views of the Godhead. "Thus we see," concludes Hale, "that at Nauvoo, Joseph endorsed for publication three views of God, two of which, on several points, were diametrically opposed." (Hale 2006, 50)
HEAVENLY MOTHER: Regarding W. W. Phelps and Eliza R. Snow advancing the concept of a Mother in Heaven (Nauvoo, Illinois, 1844 and 1845, respectively), see MP 228 (McNemar).

M. April 9, 1852, Brigham Young. "Self-Government—Mysteries—Recreation and Amusements, Not in Themselves Sinful—Tithing—Adam, Our Father and Our God. A Sermon Delivered by President Brigham Young, in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, April 9, 1852. Recorded by George D. Watt."

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken—HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom we have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later. They came here, organized the raw material, and arranged in their order the herbs of the field, the trees, the apple, the peach, the plum, the pear, and every other fruit that is desirable and good for man; the seed was brought from another sphere, and planted in this earth. The thistle, and thorn, the brier, and the obnoxious weed did not appear until after the earth was cursed. When Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, their bodies became mortal from its effects, and therefore their offspring were mortal. When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; and when he took a tabernacle, it was begotten by his Father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve; from the fruits of the earth, the first earthly tabernacles were originated by the Father, and so [JD p. 50 ends] on in succession. I could tell you much more about this; but were I to tell you the whole truth, blasphemy would be nothing to it, in the estimation of the superstitious and over-righteous of mankind. However, I have told you the truth as far as I have gone. I have heard men preach upon the divinity of Christ, and exhaust all the wisdom they possessed. All Scripturalists, and approved theologians who were considered exemplary for piety and education, have undertaken to expound on this subject, in every age of the Christian era; and after they have done all, they are obliged to conclude by exclaiming "great is the mystery of godliness[,"] and tell nothing.

It is true that the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum, as in all heavenly bodies, and in organizing element, perfectly represented in the Deity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Again, they will try to tell how the divinity of Jesus is joined to his humanity, and exhaust all their mental faculties, and wind up with this profound language, as describing the soul of man, "it is an immaterial substance!" What a learned
idea! Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character
that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven. Now, let all
who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat
them with indifference, for they will prove their salvation or damnation.

[JD 1:50-51]

N. February 6, 1855, a prayer to Adam-God by Eliza R. Snow. "CHANT, Delivered
by ELIZA R. SNOW, February 6th, 1855, before an Assembly of the Polysophical
Institution, in L. Snow's Hall."

I will praise thee, O my God.

In the midst of the daughters of Zion—in the presence of the Honorable Judges
in Israel, I will exalt thy name.

The first fruits of all the nations of the earth are here—thou hast associated me
with choice spirits, even those who have conducted nobly from the beginning.

....

Thou has committed to thy servants the key of knowledge with which they
have unlock'd the treasures of wisdom and understanding, and have open'd the
fountains of light to this generation.

Thou hast delivered thy people: . . .

.....

As thy Son Ahman stood by the three Hebrews, who anciently were cast into
the flames . . . ; so thou Ahman went in the midst of thy people, the Latter Day
Saints—they have come forth unhurt and the smell of fire is not on their
garments.

.....

Thou hast plac'd the scepter of Government in the hand of thine anointed, even
thy servant Brigham, on whom has fallen the mantle of Joseph— . . .

Well may thy praises resound throughout all the rich valleys of Ephraim: and
let the lofty snow-crown'd mountains reverberate with shouts of hosanna to thy
name.

I rejoice in thy Statutes and in the holy ordinances of thy House—my lips shall
praise thee in the social assemblies of thy Saints.

In the silent meditations of the night, when my thoughts reach after thee, and
when the vision of my mind seems to penetrate the dark curtain of mortality; I
am swallowed up in the contemplations of thy greatness and majesty, and the
condescensions of thy love for thy degenerate children.

Then I feel to say in my heart; altho' it might be thro' the furnace of affliction—
 thro' it should be by draining the cup of bitterness to the dregs, if, that, in thy
wisdom, is deem'd necessary to purify and prepare me: let me be prepar'd; that
I may behold thy face—that I may come up and dwell in thy presence.

Then, and not till then, will my soul be fully satisfied, O, my God, Adam,
Ahman, the King, the Lord of Hosts.
The selection above is transcribed from Salt Lake City's Mormon-owned *Deseret News* volume 5, issue 7 (April 25, 1855), page 53, column 2.

Eliza Roxcy (her preferred spelling) Snow (1804-87), plural widow of Joseph Smith, and plural wife of Brigham Young, recited this psalm in the home of her brother, the apostle Lorenzo Snow, at the inaugural meeting of his Polysophical Association. "The association met once in two weeks, in my brother's hall," she recalled years later,

which was decorated in a manner to correspond with the occasion. The first intimation I had of this singularly beneficial and enjoyable project, Lorenzo called at my residence and requested me to write an article, either prose or poetry, and read it on the first opening of the contemplated series, which he briefly explained. Of course I was obedient, wrote a poem, was punctual to time and place, and was amply rewarded with pure, unsophisticated enjoyment. [Eliza Snow, 252. The ILLUSTRATION ABOVE was photocopied from an original example of this newspaper issue once in my possession, a duplicate copy from the Brigham Young University library, consigned to me by Chad J. Flake and A. Dean Larsen.]

For a description of the remarkably popular and solemn - if eccentric - Polysophical soirées sponsored by Lorenzo Snow at this time, see Eliza Snow, Chapter 33. Three months after reciting her elaborate prayer to Adam-God, Eliza was called to preside over all women's ordinances in the Endowment House. She later served as general president of the Relief Society, 1866-87.

171 "The Polysophical Society held a meeting at the residence of Lorenzo Snow, at which "said society was organized and" the following chants were delivered by Sister Eliza R. Snow:‖ — Journal History for February 6, 1855, p. 1 (noting that the weather was "beautiful"). A clipping of the *Deseret News* printing of the "Chant" was pasted in directly below.

172 The grand aim in getting up the programme for each meeting was to awaken an unflagging interest, by riveting the attention from the opening of the exercises to the close. To secure this effect, the parts allotted to each were full of point and vigor, and no one was allowed more than fifteen minutes. The
One year following the example quoted above, Heber C. Kimball preached similar sentiments: "I have learned by experience that there is but one God that pertains to this people, and he is the God that pertains to this earth, the first man — That first man sent his Son to redeem the world, to redeem his brethren; . . .," DISCOURSE By Prest. HEBER C. KIMBALL, Bowery, June 29, 1856. [REPORTED BY J. V. LONG.], in Deseret News 6:188, pasted into the Journal History Vol. 41, entry for June 29, 1856, p. 1, in Selected Collections 2:4 (Church History Library call number CR 100 137, Vol. 41).

O. October 9, 1859, "Remarks by President Brigham Young, Tabernacle, Oct. 9, 1859."

Adam and Eve are the parents of all pertaining to the flesh, and I would not say that they are not also the parents of our spirits. [Deseret News 9:34 (October 25, 1859), 266]


We believe that we are the children of our parents in heaven. I do not mean our tabernacles, but our spirits. That being that dwells in my tabernacle, and those beings that dwell in yours; the beings who are intelligent and possess, in embryo, all the attributes of our Father in heaven; the beings that reside in these earthly houses, they are the children of our Father who is in heaven. He begat us before the foundations of this earth were laid and before the morning stars sang together or the sons of God shouted for joy when the corner stones of the earth

speeches, songs, readings, recitations, instrumental music on guitar, organ, piano and bagpipe were all previously arranged and assigned to their respective speakers and players, giving them sufficient time for preparation.

During the exercises the attention of all was so firmly riveted that apparently no one in the audience felt any inclination to leave a seat, speak or whisper, but an all absorbing heed was directed to each contributed portion of the magnificent moral, intellectual and spiritual picnic.

In order to preserve quietude and profound silence, and that each member, as his or her turn came, might be ready, so that not one moment should pass unoccupied to slacken the interest or cool the awakened enthusiasm, the one who was appointed "master of ceremonies," being seated beside a small table in the centre of the hall, penciled notes on small slips of paper, informing each officiate when the precise time for his or her part would arrive. Thus the name of the individual was not called. A small lad, wearing an appropriate badge indicative of his office, moved quietly around and presented the notes as addressed, and a light touch on a small bell gave the signal of the moment.

. . . .

A sacred, elevating, refining influence at all times pervaded the whole assembly, inspiring pure and lofty sentiments, and, at times during the exercises, the entire audience seemed perfectly enraptured with the Spirit and power of God. On one occasion "Mother Whitney" was so inspired and filled with the Holy Spirit in the midst of those soul-stirring exercises that she arose from her seat, and, while her face glowed with supernatural brightness, she sang with heavenly sweetness, in the gift of tongues, a song of Zion, in the pure language spoken by Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden. [Eliza Snow, 252-53]
were laid, . . . Happy thought, to think that the memory, now clogged so that we cannot pierce the veil and discern what took place in our first estate, will by and by be quickened again and that we will wake up to the realities of our past existence. When a man goes to sleep at night he forgets the doings of the day. Sometimes a partial glimpse of them will disturb his slumbers; but sleep as a general thing, and especially sound sleep, throws out of the memory everything pertaining to the past; but when we awake in the morning, with that wakefulness returns a vivid recollection of our past history and doings. So it will be when we come up into the presence of our Father and God in the mansion whence we emigrated to this world. When we get there we will behold the face of our Father, the face of our mother, for we were begotten there the same as we are begotten by our fathers and mothers here, and hence our spirits are the children of God, legally and lawfully, in the same sense that we are the children of our parents here in this world. We are so called in the scriptures. It is written in the epistle of James: "Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the father of our spirits?" Again, we read that Jesus was with the Father from before the foundation of the world; and in his last prayer he prayed that he might be restored to that glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

Now, who is Jesus? He is only our brother, but happens to be the firstborn. What, the firstborn in the flesh? No, there were millions and millions born in the flesh before he was. Then how is he the firstborn? Because he is the eldest—the first one born of the whole family of spirits and therefore he is our elder brother. But why these spirits came to inherit mortal tabernacles is a question worthy of consideration. This world is full of sin, sorrow, affliction, and death, and mankind see nothing, as it were, but mourning and sorrow, from their birth until they go down to the grave; then why send these heavenly spirits to dwell in mortal tabernacles, corrupt, fallen, and degraded as we are in this world? It is to learn, as I have already said, certain lessons that we never could learn up in yonder mansions. . . . We learn by our experience many lessons we never could have learned except we were tabernacled in the flesh.

But another and still greater object the Lord had in view in sending us down from yonder world to this is, that we might be redeemed in due time, by keeping the celestial law, and have our tabernacles restored to us in all the beauty of immortality. Then we will be able to multiply and extend forth our posterity and the increase of our dominion without end. Can spirits do this? No, they remain single. There are no marriages among spirits, no coupling together of the males and females among them; but when they rise from the grave, after being tabernacled in mortal bodies, they have all the functions that are necessary to people worlds. As our Father and God begat us, sons and daughters, so will we rise immortal, males and females, and beget children, and, in our turn, form and create worlds, and send forth our spirit children to inherit those worlds, the same as we were sent here, and thus will the works of God continue, and not only God himself, and His Son Jesus Christ have the power of endless lives, but all of His redeemed offspring. They grow up like the parents; that is a law of nature so far as this world is concerned. Every kind of being begets its own like, and when
fully matured and grown up the offspring become like the parent. So the offspring of the Almighty, who begot us, will grow up and become literally Gods, or the sons of God. Here is another doctrine wherein we differ from the world, perhaps not so much differ either, for they do sometimes believe in that passage of scripture which speaks of Gods. "If they call them Gods unto whom the word of God comes," says Jesus, or words to that effect, why then do you find fault with me because I make myself the Son of God?" If those prophets and inspired men, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, and others to whom the word of God came were Gods in embryo why do you find fault with the only begotten of the Father, so far as the flesh is concerned, because he makes himself the Son of God? We, then, shall become Gods, or the sons of God.

Much might be said in this connection with regard to the doctrine of plurality of wives. There is a difference between the male and the female so far as posterity is concerned. The female is so capacitated that she can only be the mother of a very limited number of children. Is man thus capacitated? Was not Jacob the patriarch of old capable of raising posterity by all his wives? He certainly was; and were not many of the ancient prophets and inspired men capable of raising twenty, forty, fifty, or a hundred children, while the females could only raise a very limited number on an average. In the resurrection, when the four wives of Jacob come out of their graves, will he divorce three of them and only keep one? or will they all multiply and spread forth their dominions under the old patriarch while eternal ages shall last? and would a monogamist have power to fill a world with spirits sooner than a polygamist? Which would accomplish the peopling of a world quickest, provided that we admit this eternal increase, and the eternal relationship of husband and wife--after the resurrection as well as in this world? . . .

Then again, it oftentimes happens that a monogamist, or the man with but one wife, loses that wife; and by the Scriptures he is permitted to marry again. If he loses a second wife it is lawful for him to marry a third wife, and so on. Now if we admit the eternal covenant of marriage between the first pair--two immortal beings, and that they were commanded to multiply, then, if the same order of marriage is to be continued, and we become immortal, and all the man's three wives who have died in succession come up out of the grave, must he divorce all but one, or will he have them all? And if he must divorce any, which must he divorce, and which must he claim? Does not everything that is consistent and reasonable, and everything that agrees with the Bible show that plurality of wives must exist after the resurrection? It does, or else there will be a breaking up of the marriage covenant.

[JD 14:240-44. Also see comments by Brigham Young in 1852, in MP 339 (Priest, The Anti-Universalist, section headed "Countless Worlds, with Adams and Eves").]
Q. April 7, 1895, Wilford Woodruff. General Conference address.

Before I sit down I want to say a word to the Elders of Israel on another subject. . . . Cease troubling yourselves about who God is; who Adam is, who Christ is, who Jehovah is. For heaven’s sake, let these things alone. Why trouble yourselves about these things? . . . God is God. Christ is Christ. The Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost. That should be enough for you and me to know. I say this because we are troubled every little while with inquiries from Elders anxious to know who God is, who Christ is, and who Adam is. I say to the Elders of Israel, stop this. . . . We have had letter after letter from Elders abroad wanting to know concerning these things. Adam is the first man. He was placed in the Garden of Eden, and is our great progenitor. God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are the same yesterday, today, and forever, that should be sufficient for us to know. [Millennial Star 57 (June 6, 1895), 355-56, as quoted and cited in Kirkland, 40, 44 n. 57]

R. James E. Talmage, 1915. JESUS THE CHRIST. A Study of the Messiah and His Mission according to Holy Scriptures both Ancient and Modern. . . . Published by the Church. Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1915.

We claim scriptural authority for the assertion that Jesus Christ was and is God the Creator, the God who revealed Himself to Adam, Enoch, and all the antediluvian patriarchs and prophets down to Noah; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God of Israel as a united people, and the God of Ephraim and Judah after the disruption of the Hebrew nation; the God who made Himself known to the prophets from Moses to Malachi; the God of the Old Testament record; and the God of the Nephites. We affirm that Jesus Christ was and is Jehovah, the Eternal One. [page 32; also quoted and discussed by Kirkland, 41]

In "Jehovah as the Father," Boyd Kirkland demonstrates with numerous prominent examples that this Mormon equating of Christ with Jehovah was a later-nineteenth century development, by no means emphasized or necessarily believed by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other early leaders. He further shows how, for many mid- to late-nineteenth-century Mormons, identities of the Godhead - and even the numbers of beings in the Godhead - were highly confused and debated (Kirkland, 37-41).


23 cm. 8 pages. Pamphlet, stapled. Flake 1667.

This is one of the most important theological statements or clarifications of the basic concept of the Godhead ever produced by LDS Church authorities. It
finally established the basic doctrines of deity which are generally held by Mormons today. After its first appearance in this pamphlet, *The Father and The Son* was reproduced in the *Improvement Era* 19 (August 1916), pp. 934-42, and in the missionary journal, *Liahona* 21 (March 25, 1925), pp. 380-84.

By 1916, according to Thomas G. Alexander, it would seem that James E. Talmage, John A. Widtsoe and B. H. Roberts had "... undertaken a reconstruction which carried doctrine far beyond anything described in the Lectures on Faith or generally believed by Church members prior to 1835." Despite statements by Joseph Smith in the 1840s, and compounded by a variety of interesting doctrines itemized above, Latter-day Saints held a variety of beliefs. Alexander explains...

Official statements were required to canonize doctrines on the Father and the Son, ideas which were elaborated by the progressive theologians. A clarification was particularly necessary because of the ambiguity in the scriptures and in authoritative statements about the unity of the Father and the Son, the role of Jesus Christ as Father, and the roles of the Father and Son in creation. A statement for the Church membership prepared by the First Presidency and the Twelve, apparently first drafted by Talmage, was published in 1916. The statement made clear the separate corporeal nature of the two beings and delineated their roles in the creation of the earth and their continued relationships with this creation. [Alexander, 29]

*The Father and the Son* made it necessary for Charles W. Penrose to delete and alter portions of Parley P. Pratt's *Key to the Science of Theology* in order to make that work agree with the updated Mormon description of the Godhead. It soon caused the Lectures on Faith to be dropped from the Doctrine and Covenants (on the grounds that the Lectures had supposedly never been canonized by the Church). (Alexander, 29-30). This simple-looking pamphlet, "carefully crafted using scriptural prooftexts" (Charles, 105), not only had major impact on Mormon scripture and other texts, but crystallized to some degree the most basic tenets of LDS theology as they are known today.

T. 1946. Hugh Nibley. *No, Ma’am That’s Not History; A Brief Review of Mrs. Brodie’s Reluctant Vindication of a Prophet She Seeks to Expose*, By Hugh Nibley, Ph.D. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946)

Deriding Fawn McKay Brodie's *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), Nibley wrote:

But the Mormons have no History of Dogma. There has never been a Mormon scholar. Learned men in various fields have been Mormons, but there are no experts on matters of doctrine; there has never been a council or synod to alter or even discuss any matter of doctrine. [p. 45 ends]
If Joseph Smith were to walk into a conference of the Mormon Church today he would find himself completely at home; and if he were to address the congregation they would never for a moment detect anything the least bit strange, unfamiliar or old-fashioned in his teaching.

... of all churches in the world only this one has not found it necessary to readjust any part of its doctrine in the last hundred years. [pp. 45-46]

The gospel as the Mormons know it sprang full-grown from the words of Joseph Smith. It has never been worked over or touched up in any way, and is free of revisions and alterations. Joseph Smith took the same elements that have proven so recalcitrant and so hopelessly conflicting in the hands of the churchmen and threw them together, with an awful lot of other stuff, to follow Brodie, into a single wildly chaotic mess. And lo and behold, everything fell into line of its own accord; all the haphazard elements in the bewildering heap fitted together perfectly to form a doctrine so commanding that not even a hint of rhetorical paradox is needed to support it, and no "Gregorian compromise" with a pleasure-loving world has been necessary to assure its vigorous growth.

The merciless logic of the Mormon doctrine made its strictly amateur missionaries from the outset the bane of the learned cloth throughout the world. [pp. 61-62]


Cultists and other enemies of the restored truth, for their own nefarious 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...

... 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.

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 all power, and the 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. [pp. 17-18]

"There is but little known," thought one mid-nineteenth-century non-Mormon living in Salt Lake City,

respecting their religious creed by the world at large, and even the more ignorant "saints," as they call themselves, have never penetrated the sublime arcana of their religion.

A belief that Jo Smith and his successors were prophets, and held intercourse with the other world, and possessed all the gifts bestowed upon the Disciples, and that the Book of Mormon was discovered and translated by inspiration, is usually supposed to comprise the theory of Mormonism; but this is by no means the case. Though commenced in ignorance, they have finally perfected a grand theory, in the construction of which the mystic lore of the Brahmins and the traditions of the Jews, and the precepts of Mahomet, and the vagaries of Swedenborg, all seem to have been pressed into the service, and having sifted, culled, and abridged, all these different systems, till they in some measure coalesce, they have cemented them together with a few ideas of their own, and this is Mormonism.

[Christian Watchman & Reflector 32:13 (newspaper, Boston, for Thursday, March 27, 1851), back page article, p. 52, entitled "The Mormons of Utah," copied from an article by "A correspondent of the National Era, writing from the Great Salt Lake City . . ."]
This page and those which follow were created to list sources which are cited in Mormon Parallels entry 481. To avoid confusing these pages with pages which appear in the full book, these are numbered with upper-case roman numerals.

Where specialized or non-standard abbreviations have been used to cite some of the following works in the article above, those abbreviations precede the entries below in light color. However, all entries are arranged alphabetically by author or main entry (not by the abbreviation).

All PRINTED items are interfiled in a single alphabet below, following the brief list of Digital Access and Media.

**DIGITAL ACCESS AND MEDIA**

**Journal History –**

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Church Historian’s Office.** JOURNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, 1896–1923. 634 scrapbook volumes assembled by the Church Historian’s Office, mainly during the early twentieth century (but covering the period from ca. 1830-1923), consisting primarily "... of clippings from newspapers and magazines or typed transcriptions of published materials. The compilation also includes occasional extracts from minutes, diaries, correspondence, and other manuscript sources, most of which relate to nineteenth-century events." Housed at the Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Church Archives call number: CR 100 137. Available on DVD in Turley, ed., Selected Collections 2:1-40 (Index, DVDs 37-40). Quoted portion above, from introductory text to the DVDs.


**PRINTED MATERIAL**


**Austin, Samuel, 1760-1830.**  *A View of the Economy of the Church of God, As It Existed Primitively, Under the Abrahamic Dispensation and the Sinai Law: And As It Is Perpetuated Under the More Luminous Dispensation of the Gospel; Particularly in Regard to the Covenants.*  By Samuel Austin, A.M., Minister of the Gospel in Worcester, Massachusetts . . .  Worcester: Printed by Thomas & Sturtevant, For the Author: sold by him and by Isaiah Thomas, Jun. . . . , 1807.  This is *Mormon Parallels* entry 34.


By Peter Bauder. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life.—Jn. Canajoharie, N.Y.: Printed by A. H. Calhoun, 1834. This is Mormon Parallels entry 45.


Blanchard, Stephen. A Letter Addressed to Ethan Smith, the Congregationalist Minister in Hopkinton, N. H., Occasioned by His Sermon, Entitled "Episcopacy Examined." . . . Concord, New Hampshire: Printed by Isaac Hill, 1817. This is Mormon Parallels entry 61.


Crawley, Peter. A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church. Volume One 1830-1847. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, [c. 1997]. References are to item numbers except where pages are cited specifically.


DAB –


Hale, Van. "'I am Liberal in My Sentiments Towards All Men': Exploring the Mind of Joseph Smith on Diversity Among the Saints." Sunstone: Mormon Experience, Scholarship, Issues & Art, issue 144 (December 2006), pp. 41-54.


JFS . . . — see Smith, Joseph Fielding.

JD —

*The Journal of Discourses.* Liverpool, November 1, 1853 - May 17, 1886. 26 volumes. Weekly or semi-monthly periodical, usually cited simply by annual volume number and page (e.g., "JD 3:277"). "Sermons delivered by [Latter-day Saint] church authorities, principally during the period indicated." —Flake 4504


M. McConkie –


[McNEMAR, Richard (or Rufus BISHOP)] *The Orthodox Trinity, With a few remarks on certain doctrines therewith connected.* As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: To the Unknown God! whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. --Paul. [caption title]. [Watervliet, (O[hio]), March 1, 1835.] This is Mormon Parallels entry 228, which can be downloaded as part of the MORMON PARALLELS SAMPLER document at http://www.mormonparallels.com/parallels/mpsampler2008.pdf

Otis, Richard W., publisher.  *The Louisville Directory, for the Year 1832: To Which is Annexed, Lists of the Municipal, County and State Officers; With a List of Various Societies, and Their Officers. Also, An Advertiser.* Louisville [Kentucky]: Published by Richard W. Otis. James Virden, Printer, 1832.  [Reprint by G. R. Clark Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1970].  This is *Mormon Parallels* entry 296.  My citation to this work in MP 481 (further above, p. 1946) is to my commentary in MP 296, rather than to the Otis *Directory* itself.

Priest, Josiah.  *The Anti-Universalist, Or History of the Fallen Angels of the Scriptures; Proofs of the Being of Satan and of Evil Spirits: Intended as a Refutation of the Three Main Points of Universalism, Namely, That There is No Hell After Death; No Devil or Satan as a Being; And No Future Day of Final Judgment —In Two Parts. By Josiah Priest. Author of the Millenium [sic], American Antiquities, &c. Embellished with Twenty-Two Engravings. PART I.* Albany: Printed by J. Munsell, 1837.  This is *Mormon Parallels* entry 339.


Smith, Ethan.  *A Treatise on the Character of Jesus Christ and on the Trinity in Unity of the Godhead; With Quotations from the Primitive Fathers. By Ethan Smith, A.M. Pastor of a Church in Hopkinton, N.H.* But whom say ye that I am?—Thou art the Christ. Immanuel,—God with us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. That ye should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. Because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.  Boston: Published by R. P. & C. Williams.  Printed by N. Willis, 1814.  This is *Mormon Parallels* entry 397.

HC –

Joseph Smith Papers –

Joseph Smith Writings –

Joseph Smith Words –

JFS Answers –


**Snow, Eliza R.** *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* Written and Compiled by his Sister, Eliza R. Snow Smith . . . Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, Printers, 1884.


**Towle, Nancy.** *Vicissitudes Illustrated, in the Experience of Nancy Towle, in Europe and America.* Written by herself. With an Appendix of Letters, &c. An Engraving—


Whitman, Samuel. Christ the Son of God Before He was Made Flesh. A Sermon, the Substance of Which was Preached at Cummington, October 5, 1819. At a Session of the Mountain Association. By Samuel Whitman. A. M. "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject." Titus iii. 10. Second Edition. Goshen, M[as]s.: Printed at the Press of the Author, 1820. This is Mormon Parallels entry 469.

