



Type: Magazine Article

The Book of Abraham - Its Genuineness Established, Chapter V

Author(s): George Reynolds

Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. XLI, No. 5 (Feb. 3, 1879),
pp. 65-67

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Abstract: Gospel ideas believed in by the Ancients.— First departures from the True Faith.—The Egyptian Worship of Adam and the Patriarchs.—The book of the Dead.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

MILLENNIAL STAR.

"HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD, O YE NATIONS, AND DECLARE IT IN THE ISLES AFAR OFF, AND SAY, HE THAT SCATTERETH ISRAEL WILL GATHER HIM, AND KEEP HIM, AS A SHEPHERD DOTHS HIS FLOCK."—*Jeremiah xxxi, 10.*

No. 5, Vol. XLI.

Monday, February 3, 1879.

Price One Penny.

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM—ITS GENUINENESS ESTABLISHED.

BY ELDER GEORGE REYNOLDS.

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53.]

CHAP. V.

Gospel ideas believed in by the Ancients.

—*First departures from the True Faith.—The Egyptian Worship of Adam and the Patriarchs.—The book of the Dead.*

It is not difficult for those who believe in the Bible as it is written, to understand that immediately after the flood there was but one form of faith upon the earth, and that the true one. Noah was a preacher of righteousness both before and after the deluge, and because of their obedience to God's laws, he and his family were saved from the universal destruction that came upon the wicked. But their descendants in an early day began to depart from the purity of the truths that had saved "the fathers," and a knowledge of the forms of iniquity that existed among the antediluvians was in some manner conveyed to them, and incorporated in their debased new systems of worship. Noah, Melchize-

dek and others battled with but partial success against these growing infamies, and Abraham was especially called of the Lord to usher in a new dispensation. We have seen, in part, how he fulfilled this call; we shall now refer to some gospel ideas that for many centuries afterwards were found incorporated amongst the filth and rubbish of Paganism, some in Egypt, some in Persia, some in Chaldea, some in Greece, Rome, and other nations. From this almost universal admixture of the true and the false, it is evident that there was some primeval source from which the ancient gentile nations drew that which was good and true in their religions.

In our researches into the mythology of these peoples we find, amongst others, the following gospel ideas:

The belief in the existence of one great Father, God.

The prophecy and expectation of the coming of the Son of God in the flesh.

A reverence for Adam as the great

prince of his race, in some nations extended to his worship as the father of the terrestrial gods.

The belief in a resurrection, and in future rewards and punishments.

The necessity of faith in the gods, and under certain very remarkable circumstances, to be hereafter noticed, of repentance and baptism.

The administration of washings and anointings.

Traditions, more or less perfect, of the great war in heaven, when Lucifer and his angels were cast down upon the earth.

The belief in good and bad angels, ministers of the will of heaven.

A belief in the eternity of matter, and

The almost universal practice of sacrifice.

To give strength to the above assertions we shall now appeal to a number of well-known authors.

The Rev. Mr. Goodsir, in his work on *Ethnic Inspiration*, writes: "The principles of mythology enable us to discern the true order in which the various erroneous and morbid developments of human belief arose. It proves both, that Monotheism—the knowledge of the true God, preceded the various forms of polytheism, and especially the worship of the heavenly bodies; and that the worship of dead men preceded other forms of false or idolatrous worship; and the same facts which show that the worship of dead men was the first step in false religion, prove at the same time the original grafting of this on the belief of a heavenly Creator and Father. Were there no other than the single case of Egypt, as explained from its language, hieroglyphics and monuments by Mr. Osburn, it would place the matter beyond all doubt, so clear and well-supported is that case. Adam and Eve, Noah and Tamer, Ham, Mizraim* and Phut were all deified there, while the supreme God was incontrovertibly known; and the sun was only a symbol and the supposed abode of Adam. There is reason to believe that the state of things in Chaldea and Babylon was substantially the same as this."

* Mizraim is identified with Osiris, chief lord of the land of the departed.

To this we may append the remark that the Egyptians appear to have recognized the partial truth that there be those "that are called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as there be gods many and lords many," but were ignorant of the corollary, "but to us there is but one God the Father." (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6)

It must be evident from the light thrown on the early history of the world, more especially of Egypt, by the Book of Abraham, that under the almost universally existing form of patriarchal government "the fathers" were not only High Priests unto God by right of their "fatherhood, but also the kings of the earth by that same right, † and it was one of the easiest things in the world for the descendants of these men, who ruled by right divine, to not only reverence them as ministers of heaven's will in all things, temporal and spiritual, but also to deify and afterwards worship them. Indeed in the case of most of these holy patriarchs it was but a very small step in advance of their true position in relation to the sons of men; for "He called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken." (John x. 35.)

We next appeal to Mr. Osborn, author of "The Religions of the World." In writing of the Egyptian mythology, he states: "This most ancient mythology, as described by authors who lived before the Christian era, and as set forth on the walls of the temple in which its ritual or worship was performed, was taught to the initiated and concealed from the vulgar, that God created all things at the first by the primary emanation from himself, his first born, who was the author and giver of all knowledge in heaven and on earth, being at the same time the wisdom and the word of God. The birth of this all-powerful being, his manifestation as an infant, his nurture and education through all the succeeding periods of childhood and of boyhood, constituted the grand mystery of the entire system." So convinced were the priests of this people of the

† Max Muller says king originally meant "father."

coming of a Son of God, that they had chambers prepared in their temples for his nativity.

Another quotation from Mr. Osborn will, we trust, make the matter yet clearer to our readers. He says: "The founders of the nation knew not only of Ham and Mizraim, but of various men and women contemporary with them, even of our first parents Adam and Eve, as well as of our second progenitors, Noah, and his wife Tamar. Adam has thus been handed down to us as Athom, the guide or governor of the sun; Eve as Hathar, who presided over the moon; Noah as Nuh, who presided over the Nile; while Ham, Mizraim, Phut, Neveh, or Neith, the wife of Ham, and others, occupied singular or sometimes multiform positions and offices in the Egyptian Pantheon." ‡

We will now leave modern writers, and draw attention to that wonderful papyrus, the Ancient Egyptian Ritual or Book of the Dead, and from its hieroglyphics show the relation in which Adam stood in their mythology, reminding our readers that the abode of the great father of humanity, was supposed by them to be the sun, and that the chief seat of his worship was at Heliopolis, the city of the Sun, the On of the Scriptures. Aseniath, a daughter of one of whose priests was married to Joseph, the son of Jacob.

Our extracts are necessarily brief, and simply intended to prove the trustworthiness of the quotations already made.

‡ "Religions of the World."

In the fifteenth chapter it is written:

"The praise of Athom § when the sets from the land of life, saith the Osir, ||

Glory be to Athom, setting from the gate of life,

When his colors glow in the western gate of the horizon,

Hail to thee setting from the land of life,

Thou father of the Gods."

Again (chap. xvii.) Adam is represented as saying:

"I am the great god, creating myself;

I am the great Phoenix which is in On;

I am the creator of beings and existences."

In another place it proclaims:

"Glory be to thee, O Sun; glory be to thee, O Athom.

When thou goest down, perfect, crowned and glorious."

Adam is also called "the old man whose palace is at On," the "god alone in the firmament," "Father Athom," "Righteous Athom," and much more. Probably were we better versed in the mysteries of its hieroglyphics and idioms, the translation of this wonderful testimony to the belief of the ancients in the immortality of the soul, which this ritual is, would be yet plainer and more instructive. As it is, much of its imagery is very difficult for modern minds to grasp.

§ The Egyptian form of the name Adam.

|| The deceased.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE REYNOLDS' POLYGAMY CASE.

TEXT OF RULING ON THE MAIN QUESTION.

Washington, Jan. 10.

A decision was rendered in the United States Supreme Court on Monday, and briefly reported, in the case of the polygamist George Reynolds, against the United States, brought here by appeal from the Supreme Court of

the Territory of Utah. The following, with some unimportant exceptions, is the full text of the opinion of this court, delivered by Chief Justice Waite:

"So far as it relates to the prisoner's plea of religious belief, and to the constitutional power of Congress to prohibit polygamy in the territories, the