

## **6.1abcde Five Latter-day Saint leaders discuss the racial priesthood restriction in newspaper articles published between 1852 and 1857.**

6.1a “To the Saints,” *Deseret News*, April 3, 1852, 2.

6.1b Orson Pratt, “The Pre-Existence of Man,” *The Seer* (Washington, D.C.) April 1853.

6.1c “Southern Women and Slavery,” *St Louis Luminary*, (St. Louis, Missouri) March 24, 1855, 70.

6.1d “African Discoveries,” *Western Standard*, (San Francisco, California) February 7, 1857, 2.

6.1e “Remarks on J. R. Giddings’s Letter,” *The Mormon* (New York) September 12, 1857, 2.

### **Documents**

#### **a. “To the Saints,” *Deseret News*, April 3, 1852, 2 [Willard Richards, Editor].<sup>1</sup>**

God hath made of one blood all nations, kindreds, and tongues that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. He gave, also, one language to all men, so that they would understand each other in their own tongue; but when men had corrupted their ways before the Lord, by shedding innocent blood, and committing all manner of abominations, the heavens were displeased, and the inhabitants of the earth were cursed; some with a skin of blackness, some with darkness, and all with confusion of languages; and that as a punishment, so that their evil deeds might be manifest to themselves, and each other; so that they might carry the marks thereof in their faces, and hear the sound thereof in their ears continually, that if it were possible they might be led to repentance, whereby they might obtain forgiveness for the past, and be restored again to their original oneness and godlike purity, through the redemption th[at] is in Christ Jesus.

But how far have these judgments had their desired effect? Is there any more a oneness of color amongst men now, than there was thousands of years ago? Are not the languages and

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<sup>1</sup> “To the Saints,” *Deseret News*, April 3, 1852, 2.

dialects of men and nations increasing instead of diminishing? And if this increase in diversity of color and language continue, how long will it take to restore the inhabitants of the earth back to their original oneness? Jesus said, “if ye are not one, then ye are not mine;” and the true extended meaning of this is, *one in all things*; one in language, one in color, one in faith, and one in act; for when all are of one faith, the one faith will produce oneness of action; and all will keep the commandments, and receive a like reward, by restoration back again to the presence of the Eternal Father in the heavens.

These diversified appearances among men, arose through giving heed to the temptations of the devil. Eve was tempted, deceived, and sinned. Adam was tempted, though not deceived; yet “sinned that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.”<sup>2</sup>—If Adam had not sinned, men might not have been, and earth and joy might have remained strangers to each other; for the earth is joyful, when her children rejoice; and when all her children become one again, the earth will rejoice with her offspring in celestial glory.

But all this cannot be brought about in a moment. The citizens of the world have had six thousand years to learn to do better, to do well; but instead of learning wisdom by experience, they grow worse and worse, and more and more foolish and wicked; and instead of being more united go farther asunder; neither can man restore himself, wholly, by his own acts, from the degradation into which he has fallen; hence the holy priesthood is committed unto man on the earth, to lead him in the right way; and enable him to do that which he, alone, cannot accomplish; and through obedience to this priesthood, all men may, in the end, arrive at the greatest degree of glory and exaltation it is possible to seek for; but, at best, it will take some time to accomplish the object; and with many, and in many things, it will take a long time.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a paraphrase of 2 Nephi 2:25 which reads: “Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy.”

For instance, the descendants of Cain cannot cast off their skin of blackness, at once, and immediately, although every soul of them should repent, obey the gospel, and do right, from this day forward. The mark was put upon Cain, by God himself, because Cain killed his brother Abel thereby hoping to get the birthright, and secure to himself the blessings which legally belonged to Abel; but Cain could not obtain Abel's birthright by murder, as Jacob obtained Esau's by purchase, by contract, paying a mess of pottage; the same as buying a farm, and paying a stipulated price; by such mutual agreement, the farm changes owners; but if one man kills another for the sake of getting his farm, the farm does not change owners, though the owner be dead; it descends to his heirs.

Cain did not obtain Abel's birthright and blessing, though he killed him for that purpose; the blessings which belonged to Abel, descended to his posterity; and until the blessings of Abel's birthright are fully received, secured, and realized, by his (Abel's) descendants, Cain and his posterity must wear the mark which God put upon them; and his white friends may wash the race of Cain with fuller's soap every day they cannot wash away God's mark; yet, the Canaanite may believe the gospel, repent, and be baptized, and receive the Spirit of the Lord, and if he continue faithful until Abel's race is satisfied with his blessings, then may the race of Cain receive a fullness of the priesthood, and become satisfied with blessings, and the two become as one again, when Cain has paid the uttermost farthing.

The Lamanites, through transgression, became a loathsome, ignorant and filthy people, and were cursed with a skin of darkness, which they cannot throw off at pleasure, or in a moment, though they should all embrace the gospel at once; yet they have the promise, if they

will believe, and work righteousness, that not many generations shall pass away before they shall become a white and delightsome people<sup>3</sup> but it will take some time to accomplish this at best. . . .

While cursings were poured out of the heavens on those who wrought wickedness, in ancient days, blessings were bestowed on those whose works pleased the Lord, as was the case with Abraham, whose blessings were to descend to his posterity through Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, &c., to the latest generations; of whom are the saints of the last days; and Ephraim, though younger than Manasseh, obtained the great blessing of Jacob, secured the birthright, and was declared the “first born,” and legal holder of the priesthood; and in his descent has the priesthood been restored in this dispensation.

**b. Orson Pratt, “The Pre-Existence of Man,” *The Seer* (Washington, D.C.) April 1853.<sup>4</sup>**

All the spirits when they come here are innocent, that is, if they have ever committed sins, they have repented and obtained forgiveness through faith in the future sacrifice of the Lamb. So far as innocency is concerned, they enter this world alike; but so far as circumstances are concerned they are not alike. One class of spirits are permitted to come into the world in an age when the priesthood and kingdom of God are on the earth, and they hear and receive the gospel; others enter the world in an age of darkness, and are educated in foolish and erroneous doctrines. Some are born among the people of God and are brought up in the right way; others are born among the heathen, and taught to worship idols. Some spirits take bodies in the lineage of the chosen seed, through whom the priesthood is transferred, others receive bodies among the

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<sup>3</sup> Here Richards refers to 1 Nephi 12:23; 2 Nephi 5:21-22; and 2 Nephi 30:6, verses in the Book of Mormon which speak of the Lamanites, a branch of Book of Mormon peoples who fell away from a belief in Christ and were “cursed” and became “loathsome.” Nineteenth century Latter-day Saints understood the “cursing” to be racial, a curse of dark skin, but that through repentance the Lamanites could become “white and delightsome” again.

<sup>4</sup> Orson Pratt, “The Pre-Existence of Man,” *The Seer* (Washington, D.C.) April 1853.

African negroes or in the lineage of Canaan whose descendants were cursed, pertaining to the priesthood.<sup>5</sup>

Now if all the spirits were equally faithful in their first estate in keeping the laws thereof, why are they placed in such dissimilar circumstances in their second estate? Why are some placed in circumstances where they are taught of God, become rulers, kings, and priests, and finally are exalted to all the fulness of Celestial glory; while others are taught in all kinds of wickedness, and never hear the gospel, till they hear it in prison after death, and in the resurrection receive not a Celestial glory, but a Terrestrial? If rewards and punishments are the results of good and evil actions, then it would seem that the good and evil circumstances under which the spirits enter this world; must depend upon the good and evil actions which they had done in the previous world. Our condition when we enter the next world will depend upon our conduct here, By analogy, then, does, not our condition when we enter this world, depend upon our conduct before we were born? Does not the question which the Apostles put to the Savior, respecting the man who was born blind, show that they considered it possible for a man to sin before he was born?<sup>6</sup> They considered it reasonable that a person should be born blind as a penalty for the sins which he had committed before he was born. Though the spirits are all innocent when they come here may it not be possible that they are forgiven and made innocent on condition that they shall enter this world under circumstances either favorable or unfavorable,

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<sup>5</sup> Abraham 1:23-26 states: "The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden; When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land. Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal. Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood."

<sup>6</sup> John 9:2 (KJV) states: "And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

according to the nature of their sins?<sup>7</sup> Do not the inhabitants of our world, who are raised from the dead, differ in glory as one star differs from another?<sup>8</sup> Is it not necessary that they should be forgiven of all their sins and made innocent before they can receive the Holy Ghost or any degree of glory? And do not the differences of their condition in the resurrection depend upon the nature of their actions in this life? If then they must be forgiven and become innocent before they can even enter a kingdom of glory, and if, when they do enter there, it is under a great variety of circumstances, depending on their actions here, then we may from analogy reason that the spirits must be forgiven and become innocent before they can even come here, and that when they do come, it will be under a great variety of conditions, depending on their actions in a previous state.

**c. “Southern Women and Slavery,” *St. Louis Luminary*, (St. Louis, Missouri) 24 March 1855, 70 [Erastus Snow, Editor].<sup>9</sup>**

In a recent article, Mrs. Swishelm of the *Pittsburgh Visitor*, makes the following statement:

“Experience has taught us that Southern women are more intensely attached to slavery than men are—that they will more bitterly resent any attack upon it, and are more likely to be cruel than the other sex. Find a lady whose husband has a dozen black mistresses and any number of slave children, and you will find one with a most insane hatred of abolition. A clergyman of high

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<sup>7</sup> Pratt here seems to allude to a revelation Joseph Smith claimed in May 1833, canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 93:38. It reads: “Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God.”

<sup>8</sup> Here Pratt refers to Latter-day Saint understandings of the afterlife and its various degrees of glory. He is paraphrasing a revelation Joseph Smith claimed to receive in February 1832 which was then canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 76:98. It states: “And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world.”

<sup>9</sup> “Southern Women and Slavery,” *St. Louis Luminary*, (St. Louis, Missouri) March 24, 1855, 70.

standing in the Reformed Presbyterian church told us he had heard young ladies talk in one of the Southern States. The conversation was upon beaux, when one an heiress, belle and beauty expressed her total disapprobation of a young gentleman because he had no slave children. She did it openly and without a blush. He questioned her, to be certain that he understood her aright, and she assured him that it was customary for young men, when quite young, to select some one or more of his father's slave girls as mistresses—that their children were considered as belonging to him and so when he married he had some one to wait upon his wife; and in fact that the young man in question had not made such provisions she held to be a sign that he would not make a good husband.

It is certain that Southern women do not all feel thus, and that many who do, do not express the feeling to strangers; but the publicity which is universal about these illicit connections, proves that the women of the South cannot be heartily opposed to them, for women dictate or at least sanction the public sentiment in which they move.”

If the above be a correct statement of the feelings of the *Dames du Sud* concerning their husbands and their slave children, it shows a corrupt, degraded and indefensible state and condition of their domestic relations, whilst we believe with the old Prophets and Saints, that it is lawful and right, if the Lord will, that a man be honorably married to two or more wives; yet we believe that a man who will mix his seed with the daughters of Ham, whether it be for sensual gratification only, or as suggested above—for the purpose of making slave children, he has taken a step that he will never recover, worlds without end. It was said of old, that a bastard should not enter into the congregation of the righteous unto the tenth generation<sup>10</sup>; and those of the house of Israel, and how much more those born of the accursed race of Canaan. Whatever may be said by

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<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 23:2 (KJV) reads: “A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.”

abolitionists to the contrary, it is a fact as clear as the noon-day sun that the children of Ham are accursed, and are doomed to be servants to their brethren; and those who degrade themselves by sexual intercourse with them, will partake of their curse, and their seed will be doomed to servitude and bondage as long as labor is needful and service demanded. They may by faith, repentance and baptism be blessed with the remission of sins they have committed in the flesh, and with the gift of the Holy Ghost; but they cannot receive the Holy Priesthood and govern in the kingdom of God, but must be servants to their brethren.

**d. “African Discoveries,” *Western Standard*, (San Francisco, California) February 7, 1857, 2 [George Q. Cannon, Editor].<sup>11</sup>**

[This article is a reprint of a column about Dr. David Livingstone, a medical missionary for the London Missionary Society who had spent over a decade in South Africa and traveled extensively on the continent. It is largely a chronicle of his findings and descriptions of African society and culture. At the end, Cannon adds his own commentary which comprises the excerpt included here].

His [Livingstone’s] travels have thrown a flood of geographical and interesting light on the interior of the continent of Africa, and shows, that though the descendants of Ham have been cursed as pertaining to the Priesthood, they have been blessed with the blessings of the earth pronounced upon their progenitor by his father Noah. And if we may rely upon the testimony of this successful traveler in regard to their politic[al] laws and humane customs, they have not only been blessed with the blessings of the earth but have been blessed with the blessings of wisdom,

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<sup>11</sup> “African Discoveries,” *Western Standard*, (San Francisco, California) February 7, 1857, 2.

which the book of Abraham informs us, were also conferred upon Ham by Noah<sup>12</sup>; affording a striking instance of the respect which the Lord pays to the words of His servants and the precision with which they are fulfilled, though ages should elapse.

**e. “Remarks on J. R. Giddings’s Letter,” *The Mormon* (New York), September 12, 1857, 2. [John Taylor, Editor; William I. Appleby, Assistant Editor].<sup>13</sup>**

[This article is a response to abolitionist Joshua R. Giddings who had written a letter to the editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* criticizing Christian churches for their ongoing support of slavery].

We publish on our front page of this week’s issue, Mr. Joshua R. Giddings’s letter to the editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*—not because we have any faith whatever in his system or devices, or in what he recommends. As it regards slavery, we have but little to say either for or against it; but there is one question we would like to ask Mr. Giddings: —If he or all the abolitionists in the world, calculates or expects to remove the “*curse*” of bondage and blackness from the negro, until He who permitted the same to come upon them sees proper to remove the curse? When will it be that *Ham* will rise up and stand in his place? Or when will the time come that “there shall no more Canaanite be found in the house of the Lord?” Or what is the cause of the negro’s deformity, bondage, or of their spirits having to take bodies or tabernacles cursed with bondage and blackness? Mr. Giddings, declare unto us, if you have understanding. Know ye not that there must be a cause to produce an effect? The effect is apparent; but what is

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<sup>12</sup> Abraham 1:26 reads: “Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.”

<sup>13</sup> “Remarks on J. R. Giddings’s Letter,” *The Mormon* (New York) September 12, 1857, 2.

the cause? Ye wise men of the world, tell us if you can. But we know you cannot; therefore you “*go it blind.*” . . .

Noah, after he came out of the ark, and lay inebriated in his tent, was made sport of by his son Ham: Noah, thereupon conferred the Patriarchal order and Priesthood upon Shem, blessed Japhet, to be enlarged of the Lord, and to dwell in the tents of Shem; he also blessed Ham with the blessings of the earth, and with wisdom, but cursed him as appertaining to the Priesthood. But some years after, a daughter of Ham, Egyptus, discovered the land of Egypt, who afterwards settled her sons in it, and thus from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land. The first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, (which signifies royal blood,) the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the Government of Ham, which was Patriarchal. Pharaoh tried to imitate the Patriarchal order of his father and claimed authority from his grandfather Noah, through Ham, and administered in the ordinances pertaining to the Priesthood, but without authority, because Ham and all his descendants were cursed as pertaining to that, yet he acted in it, and idolatry was the inevitable consequence.<sup>14</sup> Just so it will be with the religious world in time, if God should suffer things to exist, as they do and are increasing at present.

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<sup>14</sup> Here Snow or Appleby paraphrase Abraham 1:23-26.