

Sermon Subject: THE GLORY OF GOD IS INTELLIGENCE

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants Section 90:4,5,6.

Truth is a knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come; and whatsoever is more or less than this, is the spirit of that wicked one, who was a liar from the beginning. The Spirit of truth is of God .... Man is also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also, otherwise there is no existence. Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man, because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light. And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation, for man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receiveth a fullness of joy. The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple. The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth; light and truth forsaketh that evil one,.....

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Before the great and unfathomable mystery of God, puny man stands in awe and wonder. He has not the capacity to comprehend, nor the vocabulary to express the might, the majesty, the omnipotence, the omniscience which he ascribes to God. He is at a loss to explain the personality of God. Human personality seemingly is limited by the physical body -- limited as to size, shape, location, and duration. Yet we know that this limitation is more seeming than real. Body cells are changing every day, every hour, every moment. Old cells die, and are replaced by new. We live in the midst of an ever-changing stream of body cells, yet in the midst of this change, personality remains the same. You and I are still the same persons that we were years ago when we had a completely different set of body cells. Our Christian faith teaches us that this personality survives even the change which we call death; that personality continues to exist even though its earthly tabernacle be dissolved. Personality is of the spirit, and though it seemingly depends on the body for its expression and implementation, it can and does exist independently of the body.

God is the supreme Person. We cannot define his personality in the same physical terms with which we are accustomed to defining human personality, because definition is limitation, and God cannot be limited by form, size, location, or time, as our personality. His personality is essentially spiritual. It is not necessarily confined to one form, one size, or one location.

The most significant aspect of personality, as man observes it in himself, is not the physical, but the spiritual. The essence of personality is intelligence -- is conscious self-hood -- is the ability to say "I am, I know, I think, I will" -- the ability to think, to reason, to remember, and to learn. This is a quality of spirit, not of body. Without spirit, the body knows nothing, is aware of nothing, has no intelligence. It cannot say "I am," or "I know," or "I feel." Without spirit the body cannot think or reason or remember or learn. But when spirit takes over, intelligence is manifested through the instrumentality of the body.

The scriptures tell us that man was made in the spiritual image of God -- that our

personality is like his. That is not to say that we are his equals; but that there is a definite relationship between the personality of God, and the personality of the men he has created for fellowship with him. Because we observe that all personality manifests intelligence, and intelligence is accepted as proof of the existence of personality, we reason that the supreme and absolute Person, God, is also supreme and absolute in intelligence, in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. We therefore say that God is omniscient -- that he knows everything.

In the very nature of things, he must be omniscient if he is to be the kind of God we believe him to be. He is self-existent; he was not created or made; therefore he never had to learn from any superior or antecedent being. He is eternal; he is from everlasting to everlasting; therefore he knows all things, past, present, or future. All things that exist were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. He is the great Originator of all things, of all the laws and principles by which the universe is governed. He therefore needs no instruction in any of the laws or principles of any art or science; he is the originator, not the student, of all natural law. He is the source of all wisdom, all knowledge -- the absolute, the ultimate. He is light and truth and intelligence. The glory of God is intelligence, or light and truth.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, scientific men were almost unanimous in doubting or denying the personality of God. They believe in a materialistic mechanical universe, in which matter was everything, and spirit did not exist. Text books of science taught that energy was the product of matter, and that matter could never be created by energy. The last fifty years, and particularly the last twenty-five years, have seen an almost complete reversal of these concepts. Science has dissected the atom, which a few years ago was regarded as the irreducible minimum, the smallest possible particle of matter, and has discovered that the atom is not composed of tangible material substance at all, but is simple a loose grouping of positive and negative electrical energies. The universe is not composed of matter -- in the sense that the scientists of fifty years ago used the term -- but of something which is variously designated as electricity, force, energy, light, mind, or spirit. Today scientists have reversed themselves, and are unanimous in their believe that all matter is the product of energy, rather than energy the product of matter. They have discovered that the energy, force, electricity, light, or whatever you choose to call it, of which the universe is formed, is very much like the intangible thing which we call mind, or thought, which is an expression of personality or spirit. In other words, the universe now is seen to be spiritual rather than physical. It is an emanation of a supreme Spirit, of a supreme Personality. Sir James Jeans in his book "The Mysterious Universe" has said: "The Universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine." And in another place: "Matter may eventually prove to be pure thought."

Over a hundred years ago, in December, 1832, the same idea was expressed in spiritual rather than physical or scientific terms, in a revelation given through the prophet, Joseph Smith. We are told in this document that the Comforter, the Spirit of God, is the light of truth, which truth shineth. This light is in the sun, moon, earth, and stars. It is the power by which they are made and sustained. It is the power which enables them to give physical light to men. And then the peculiar statement is made: "And the light which now shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God, to fill the immensity of space. The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things." In other words, the physical light which enlightens the eyes, the creative light by which all things come into existence, and by which the atoms are held together, and the spiritual and intellectual light which quickens the intellect and mind of man are all essentially one and the same. All originate with God. All are manifestations

of his power, and of his intelligence. The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth.

Now, if we accept this premise, certain conclusions logically follow. If the glory of God is intelligence; if God is the source of all intelligence, which is eternal and uncreated even as God himself is eternal and uncreated, then all of our efforts to gain intelligence, wisdom, or knowledge must be God-centered. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Any man who would be God-like must become intelligent as God is intelligent -- must partake of his creative, intelligent Spirit -- the Spirit which teaches men all things, and guides them into all truth. Man cannot be ignorant, and be truly religious.

Some spark of divine intelligence is inherent in every normal man at birth. But like all other human powers, spiritual, mental, or physical, the potentiality must be developed. This is one of the major tasks of the church. It is notable, however, that the great teaching missions to benighted nations and peoples have almost all been the work of the Christian Church. The light of the gospel has been accompanied by the torch of truth, the light of secular education. In spite of the tendency of some segments of Christianity to discourage individual thought and opinion and to keep primitive peoples in ignorance and in darkness, it can still be asserted without danger of successful contradiction that the true Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of light and truth and intelligence -- a Spirit of inquiry, of study, of research, of insatiable desire to learn and to know, to develop and expand the intellect.

This church was organized in a day when facilities for public education were limited; when there were no high schools, when colleges or universities were for the wealthy or favored few, not for the masses. Although both Joseph Smith's father and his maternal grandmother had been New England school teachers, he himself received no formal education beyond the country school. This lack he made up in later life, mostly by private reading and diligent study, so that at his death he might truthfully be said to have been a well educated -- even a brilliant man.

Early in the history of the church the need was felt for better education for all, and particularly for the ordained men who were called to serve in the teaching and preaching ministry of the church. This led to the organization of what was known as the "School of the Prophets," which was begun in Kirtland, Ohio in the middle of January 1833. This school included in its curriculum such subjects as Greek, Hebrew, history, geography, literature, and philosophy, as well as the doctrines of the church. Later it was housed in the Kirtland Temple, a structure built primarily for that purpose. In this school the men of the ministry sought learning by study, and also by faith; in other words their intellectual study was supplemented and enhanced by a spiritual preparation. Kirtland also boasted a common school, which was attended by adults as well as children, which taught the common branches of learning up to high school level.

When the first settlement of saints was made in Jackson County, Missouri, in 1832 one of the first buildings erected was a schoolhouse near the present site of Troost Park in Kansas City. This was the first schoolhouse in Jackson County. Another school was opened the same year near what is now the corner of Lexington and Union Streets in Independence, not far from the present site of the William Chrisman High School. Still a third was opened in 1833 near the present site of Lone Jack. The church owned the first printing press in Jackson County, and printed the first regularly published periodical in Jackson County -- THE EVENING AND MORNING STAR.

In all the places where the church of those early days established settlements, the school was one of the first buildings erected. At the city of Far West, a log building to serve as combination school and court house was one of the first buildings.

At Nauvoo, the city charter provided for a municipal university. The regents of the university had oversight of the certification of teachers and the management of the grade schools in various sections of the city, so that the educational program of the city was one complete unit from first grade through university. In later years, it is also interesting to note that a colony of Latter Day Saints established the first school and the first periodical in what is now the city of San Francisco.

Today, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints maintains this historical interest in education. We send our children to the public schools, but we continually stress the importance of religious training in the church school, and in many areas, in week-day religious instruction, and in summer vacation Bible Schools. One of the prominent aspects of our religious life is the adult education program which is continuously carried out in institutes, work-shops, summer camp meetings or reunions, and semi-annual conferences. The church sponsors Graceland College -- a Junior College with an enrollment of 550, located at Lamoni, Iowa, and a School of Nursing in connection with the Independence Sanitarium and Hospital in Independence, Missouri, as a part of its educational program.

Not all of our people are as intelligent as they ought to be, but the teaching and the example of the church and of its leaders has always counselled men to seek, to study, to learn, to expand and enlarge their mental horizons, to cultivate the God-given and God-live intelligence which is in them by following the Spirit of truth wherever it may lead. Only the truth can make men free. Only the truth can equip them to make proper social, political, or moral choices. The glory of God is intelligence, or light and truth. We are ignorant when we ignore God, and the marvels of his creation. But if we respond to God's intelligence with our intelligence, the light that is in us grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day.