

"sought to perfect society, not by popular agitation or by re-organization, but by perfecting the individual. He recognized the fatal fallacy in the dream of those who hoped to make a perfect state out of imperfect individuals. The ideal social state, which he described as the kingdom of God, is a commonwealth in which all men are united and governed by a commanding love both for God and for their neighbors."

The present day turmoil and bitter strivings threaten to undermine basic foundations of Christian relationship. Liberty, freedom of speech, self-government, faith in God, and particularly faith in the efficacy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are facing a bombardment from the ranks of error as the world has seldom if ever witnessed.

SOMETHING FOR EACH TO DO

Too many men quail under the impending onslaught, and cry vainly, "what can we do?"

This, I repeat, we can do:

First:

By self effort attempt to initiate work around the home, and in the neighborhood, quorums and groups rendering necessary aid whenever possible; and practice honesty; speak well of your neighbors; and if you cannot do this, say nothing. Seek the best in life, and thus give to your own soul and to your own environment a touch of the beautiful.

Second:

By proclaiming, and, what is even more effective, by exemplifying in life the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only permanent panacea for the ills of mankind.

Wherefore, my beloved, . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world

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Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I wish to tell of a new interpretation of the Gospel of Christ. The occasion will permit only an outline but I make the attempt in the hope that our friends who listen and some of our members may come to a clearer understanding of the distinctive features of our message and our work. I use the word "new" interpretation rather than "true" for diplomatic reasons. "New" postulates "old" and while most people prefer to be modern rather than old-fashioned, usually no serious offense is given by placing a man in an old school of thought. Whereas, "true" assumes the "false" and everyone resents an imputation against the verity of his ideas. I make this admission frankly because I have no desire for debate. I merely want to explain.

INTELLIGENCE MAN'S CHIEF INVESTITURE

I set forth as the first aspect of this new interpretation the doctrine of the dominance of intelligence. I believe I am correct in the assertion that in all Christian literature prior to the advent of our Church there were to be found no such concepts of the origin, function, and place of intelligence in the universe as come from our modern scripture. Here are some excerpts:

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. (Doctrine and Covenants 93:29, 30.)

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

Light and truth forsake that evil one. (Doctrine and Covenants 93:36, 37.)

Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. (Doctrine and Covenants 130:18, 19.)

Now, since intelligence is co-eternal with God and is the very glory of God, it follows logically that it is the chief investiture of man. Indeed, it is man, for it is that part of his constituency that persists, that is eternal. This knowing, conceiving, illuminating principle of existence lies at the base of all our powers and potentialities. Without it there would be no virtue and no sin. It alone gives to man his free agency, the power to choose, to will, and to act, conscious of the effects of his decisions and his deeds. It accounts for the place of good and evil in the world and justifies their existence,—a philosophical problem that has baffled the minds and the thinking of great scholars, of all time.

This conception of intelligence justifies the eternal quest for knowledge and it does more. It explains the necessity of acquiring knowledge for it makes knowledge essential to progression and progression in the last analysis is salvation. It places a terrific penalty on ignorance. It lays down a new and very definite gospel doctrine that: "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (Doctrine and Covenants 131:6.)

TRUE KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLIGENCE REWARDED

The world in general and the modern world in particular with its science, scholasticism, and technology has been prone to scorn and slur religion and the church for an alleged backwardness and retardation in intellectual processes and in the acquisition of knowledge. Whatever justification there may have been in times past for such an imputation, I present now an interpretation of the Gospel that is a complete refutation of these disparaging allegations and inferences of the secular world. The Gospel of Christ offers a stimulus and a reward in the pursuit of knowledge and the development of intelligence that transcend in their appeal and promise anything that the students and philosophers have ever evolved.

But the knowledge and intelligence that it rewards must be true. "Light and truth" are the words of the revelation. It places no premium upon the acquisition of falsehood and error. It distinguishes very clearly between sophistication and true intelligence. A man once said in distinguishing intelligence from education that intelligence is that which enables one to wisely meet the situations of life without education; whereas, education is that which helps one to meet the situations of life without intelligence.

This statement may leave the inference that intelligence is largely inherited. The Gospel teaches us that it is—that it came as a native endowment of the race but that the efficacy of the endowment has been in many instances largely mitigated by the perversion of the race. It is encouraging and gratifying, however, to be assured that no man has ever quite lost this vital and all-important attribute. There is enough intelligence with every man to acquire knowledge and truth if he elects so to do. It is a significant fact, demonstrated by most extensive research and investigation, that there is no people in the earth, even the most primitive, which has not sufficient intelligence to grasp and hold to a conception of a God as a Supreme being.

INTELLIGENCE A DIVINE ESSENCE

How to exercise the intelligence we possess for the attainment and utilization of knowledge is a vital matter in the interpretation and application of the Gospel, but it is one that I must pass over briefly. The Gospel places highest value upon that intelligence and knowledge which contribute most to the enduring welfare of man. "Pure knowledge" it is called in the revelation, (Doctrine and Covenants 121:42) which defines the attributes and functions of the holy Priesthood. This pure knowledge, without which the Priesthood can not properly be administered, contemplates an understanding of the divine plan of redemption and of the principles and laws that pertain to the celestial kingdom of our Father. In all the learning of the world there is nothing of higher import for the mind of man to comprehend than the eternal principles and truths that pertain to exaltation in the presence of God. And there is no higher order of intelligence than that which enables man to perceive these glorious truths.

Since intelligence is a divine essence, it may function adequately only when recognized as divine. In that recognition faith is indispensable. Faith and knowledge constitute testimony and bring that conviction which is epitomized in the declaration, "that to know thee is eternal life." So I ask, where is the philosophy or school of thought that esteems more highly and ascribes nobler attributes to the mind and intelligence of man than does this exalted concept set forth in the new interpretation of the Gospel of Christ?

THE FAMILY OF GOD

I propose as the next major phase of this new interpretation a unique and distinctive conception of the family of God. God, the

Master Intelligence is the Creator and veritable Father of his children, the lesser but potentially divine intelligences who make up his family and populate his kingdom. As a kindly parent, he desires and designs the eternal welfare and happiness of his offspring. In modern revelation his purpose is clarified as never before in recorded scripture. It is the glory of God to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Pearl of Great Price—Moses 1:39.) And, "Men are that they might have joy." (Book of Mormon—II Nephi 2:25.) These are the sublime declarations revealed in latter days, forever banishing all doubt and uncertain speculation as to the place and purpose of man in the universe.

In what does the joy of man consist? There are two things: first, an eternal progression in intelligence, knowledge and power that leads to perfection, even as Christ is perfect; and, second, companionship with God in his presence and in the presence of his Son.

NEW CONCEPT OF HEAVEN

This pronouncement of the purpose of our being, together with additional revelations, brings a new concept of heaven. By the perfection of our lives we achieve joy and come into the presence of God. Where is he? He is in his own kingdom. Are there other kingdoms? Yes. And in that revealed knowledge we learn the truth about heaven. There are other kingdoms referred to but not fully explained by Saint Paul and also indicated in "the many mansions of my Father's house," spoken of by the Savior.

These scriptures have been fully amplified by the new interpretation. Kingdoms of eternity have been defined. Laws that govern the various kingdoms have been set forth and entrance requirements stipulated. There are preferential places and conditions in the hereafter, as there are here. The highest and most desirable is the celestial kingdom of our Father. In that kingdom and only there do intelligences attain their highest state of perfection. Only there do we have assurance of the reunion of families and the perpetuation of family relationship and eternal increase. In that kingdom man may ultimately become divine.

In the mercy of God other lesser kingdoms make provision for just compensation in the lives of men. But the lesser kingdoms are outshone by the celestial as the sun in its brightness and glory transcends the moon and the stars.

Men attain these various kingdoms by the election and the work of their lives. We do not know all the conditions precedent to entrance into the lesser kingdoms but what is necessary to come into celestial glory has been definitely revealed. The principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Christ are the laws of that kingdom. Faith, repentance, baptism, the laying on of hands for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, ordination to the Priesthood,—are all essential requirements. Why? Because God has stipulated them and because also they are consonant with the spirit, the purpose and glory of the kingdom.

Is it necessary for one to be baptized to go to heaven? That depends on the place in heaven to which one aspires. We have no knowledge as to whether it may be necessary for the lesser kingdoms, but we do know by revelation that it is absolutely essential for the heaven of the celestial kingdom of God. The scriptures give us to understand that through the general atonement of the Savior all mankind will be resurrected from the grave and come forth in a life hereafter but we know that the atonement itself is not adequate to place us in the celestial kingdom, in which respect we distinguish between the general salvation of the human family brought about by the Redeemer of the world and the exaltation of the individual accomplished by his own works and faithfulness, through the mediation of Christ.

MISSION OF CHURCH FOR LIVING AND DEAD

From this clearly defined sublime concept of heaven is devolved the mission of the Church which is: first, to disseminate knowledge of the celestial kingdom; and second, to assist in perfecting the lives of men so they may enter that kingdom.

This mission of the Church, through the revealed justice of God, is extended not only to all the living but to the dead as well. It is not designed that the accident of death shall circumscribe the free agency of man to choose and attain his ultimate destiny. Since, however, it is in the plan that certain ceremonies and ordinances which are requisite for entrance into the celestial kingdom shall be performed in mortality, merciful provision has been made whereby the living may vicariously perform these ordinances for the dead. Hence our extensive temple work wherein all conditions essential for entrance into the celestial kingdom are complied with for both the living and the dead.

I think of all Christian service vicarious work for the dead is the most Christ-like. It often entails great sacrifice. The beneficiary is not here, even to give thanks. It is true benevolence.

NATURE AND NEED OF PRIESTHOOD

As a concluding item in this new interpretation of the Gospel, I now present the doctrine of the holy Priesthood. Knowledge of God, his family and his kingdom, and reason also, assure us that we can not do his work and accomplish his purposes without a delegation of his power. The Priesthood is his commission to men. It holds the keys to his kingdom. The gates will not unlock without these keys.

Not only is the Priesthood necessary for the kingdom hereafter, but it is essential in perfecting the lives of the people. This investiture of divine power in man is a boon to him who holds it and an inestimable blessing to others. I call it the perfect plan of service because it does for man the most vital and important things that can come into his life. It inducts him into the fold of Christ. It unites him in an eternal compact of marriage. It establishes the enduring bond in which his

children are born. It leads him into celestial glory, the benediction of his life.

The nature of this divine power is set forth in some of the most beautiful language of all scripture. I have not time to repeat it all. Here is but a sample:

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

By kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

Reproving betimes with sharpness when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. (Doctrine and Covenants 121:41-44.)

DIVINE POWER EXISTS IN EARTH TODAY

Are we sure that this divine power exists in the earth today? We are. We have incontrovertible evidence of its derivation and validity. Its origin is not lost in the obscure antiquity of the past. It came to us in relatively recent time,—within the memory of our fathers. Angelic ministers, in person, bestowed it and delivered the keys. The unequivocal testimony of the witnesses is recorded and available. And the authenticity and genuineness of the power are attested, not only by accredited witnesses, but by what is equally, if not more important, the virtue and efficacy of the power itself.

Our history is replete with instances and circumstances indicating the vitality and force of this precious endowment. So that, hundreds of thousands of honest men and women have positive conviction of the restoration of God's power in the earth and the establishment of his Church founded on that power.

This, then, in brief, is the new interpretation and the new restoration of the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. I call it new although it came a century ago and although hundreds of thousands have accepted it, because today, the great preponderance of all the populations of the earth have never heard of it and do not know that the glad tidings of great joy have been re-revealed in the last dispensation of the fulness of time for the exaltation and glory of man.

In this new revelation, through God's chosen prophet, lies the hope of the world. When true intelligence shall banish error and superstition and the family of God shall be more than a theological conception; when men shall truly aspire to the highest heaven, and the duly constituted authority of God shall be recognized and esteemed, then,—and not until then,—will the long-desired peace of Christ descend upon the nations. God grant the early coming of that day! Amen.

An anthem, "Lost in the Night" (Christiansen), was sung by the Choir.