

ANSWERS GROUNDED IN TRUTH

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Where shall we look for answers to our questions of eternal import? Can these answers be found anywhere except in the revealed word? Shall we not use the holy scriptures as our starting point and then add to them such scientific theories as accord with the inspired word?

Be it remembered that we are dealing with the truths of salvation. We are seeking to know and understand these things relative to the creation, the fall, and the atonement which we must believe in order to gain salvation—only this and nothing more. If there is such a thing as salvation, it comes from God; and from him only. If men are to know what it is and how to gain it, the Lord must tell them or they will remain forever in darkness. This he has done and his word is in the scriptures.

Speaking to the Father, Jesus said: “Thy word is truth.” (John 17:17.) and how could it be otherwise? He is a God of truth and cannot lie. Jesus came to proclaim the doctrine of the Father, that is, to “bear witness unto the truth.” And, said he: “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” (John 18:37.) Those who are of the truth believe the revealed word as it is found in those writings which set forth the mind and will and voice of the Lord.

And further: Those who accept and believe what the scriptures teach this prepare themselves to receive a knowledge of truth by personal revelation. Every person who receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, that is, who receives the promise of the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead based on faithfulness, every such person has this divine promise: “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:18.) They have the promise: “By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.” (Moroni 10:6.)

It follows that if there are truths relative to the creation, the fall, and the atonement, that are essential to salvation, these truths will be revealed. If they are revealed, they will be in the scriptures. And if the saints believe the scriptures, they will gain added light and knowledge for themselves, by the power of the Holy Ghost, on all the points involved, until they attain that status of which Jesus spoke: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32-33.)

On the other hand, by rejecting the scriptural accounts and opposing the doctrines they set forth, men place themselves in the category of those of whom Jesus said: “Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge, the fulness of the scriptures; ye enter not in yourselves into the kingdom; and those who were entering in, ye hindered.” (JST, Luke 11:53.) Truly, the key of knowledge is the fulness of the scriptures.

We must not approach our study, however, until we have before us certain heaven-sent concepts about truth. Truth is eternal, absolute, unvarying. It never changes; it is as firm and fixed as the pillars of heaven; it is the same in all ages and under all circumstances.

Truth is as eternal, as absolute, as unchangeable as God himself. Indeed, it comes from God; he is its source, its originator, its author; and it is manifest to men by reason, by research, and by revelation. It speaks of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to be.

Truth does not sway like a reed in the wind. It does not accommodate itself to changing social circumstances. It is not one thing in the day of Adam and another six thousand years later. Truth is autocratic and authoritative; it is dogmatic and domineering; it is conclusive and controlling. It is what it is though earth and hell cry out in violent opposition.

All truth is always in perfect harmony with all other truth. There is never the slightest discord or divisiveness between any truths, no matter what source conveys them to the mind of man. And truth will prevail. Eventually, in the providences of Him who is the way, the life, and the truth, all error will be banished by the shining rays of the rising sun of truth.

It should not matter to any of us what the truth is in any field of inquiry—only that we come to know what it is. We did not create the truth; we cannot destroy it; and we cannot change it. We ought not concern ourselves with defending a self-chosen position. Our minds should be open and our hearts receptive to soak up truth as the scorched and burning desert drinks in the downpouring dews and rains from above.

Truth may be gained by both intellectual and spiritual means. Most men gain such truth as is theirs by the intellectual processes of reason. Spiritual talent is required to gain truth by revelation, and spirituality is acquired and nourished by faith, repentance, baptism, and following the promptings of the Holy Spirit of God. Errors can and almost invariably do creep in to the realms of reason and research. Our senses can be deceived; our research can be tainted with false postulates; and our reason can be muddled and mutton-headed. But there is never any question or doubt about revealed truth. When the Holy Spirit of God speaks to the spirit within us, truth is conveyed with absolute certainty. There neither is nor can be any deception when God speaks by the power of his Spirit.

It is more important to gain truth by revelation from the Holy Ghost than in any other way. This is the way—and the only way—the truths of salvation themselves can be known. Whether men know much or little about the things of this world, about earth, and sky and water, about social and cultural and historical matters, is of little great moment from an eternal standpoint. But salvation—which is the greatest of all the gifts of God—depends upon learning the things of God as they are revealed by the power of his Spirit.

There are many truths that can be known only by revelation. God stands revealed or he remains forever unknown. Scientists may discover some of the laws of the universe and

conclude that there must be a divine guiding power governing all things. But no man can know, except by revelation, that God is a Holy Man with a body of flesh and bones, that he lives in the family unit, and that he is the personal father of the spirits of all men.

Scientists may discover some of the laws pertaining to creation. They may come to know that creation is reorganization, that the primal elements are arranged in an appointed way to form an earth, and that the laws of physics and chemistry and gravity and what have you always apply. All this may be in the realm of research and reason. But truthseekers can never know that this earth was first created spiritually; that when it first came into being physically it was paradisiacal in nature; that it then fell to its present mortal state; that there will be a new and changed heaven and a new and changed earth in the Millennial day; and that ultimately it will be a celestial sphere—none of this can be known except by revelation.

Nor can scientists envision the fall, or the atonement, or the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost, or the resurrection, or the procreation by resurrected beings of spirit offspring—all this must be learned by revelation. The theories of the evolutionists—devised by scientists, in academic halls, by the power of reason and the intellect—do not take into account that there was no death until Adam fell; they do not take into account that animals and all forms of life lived as spirit entities before their mortal births; they do not take into account that all forms of life will be resurrected and live forever in immortality. They do not take into account these or ten thousand other gospel verities that can be known only by revelation.

Having asked the numerous questions found in this one, and having alluded to the concepts herein recited, we are now ready, item by item, from a theological and not a scientific standpoint, to consider the creation, the fall, and the redemption of man and of all forms of life. As we do so it will be necessary to make choices. A great chorus of voices—crying out in thunderous unity, as though their united harmony established the verity of their views—will say that life and all created things evolved from some single celled amoeba that lived an astronomically long time ago in some primordial swamp. Another chorus will chant the contents of whole libraries of text books, and books that quote each other and vie for prominence by adding this or that new discovery, or by setting forth some hitherto unknown theoretical postulate. These are the voices of the world. Almost everywhere their theories and guesses are enthroned in temples of learning as though the riddle and problems of the ages had been solved.

Up to this point in time only an occasional voice has been raised in question and in opposition. God grant that more gospel voices will be raised in the future and that the deafening din of speculation may be put to rest by the sweet strains of revealed truth. And as these new voices are raised, the wise among men will know that all things must be judged by gospel standards.

The time is long past when members of the Church should try to make the gospel accounts, say, of the creation, or, of the origin of man, fit the current scientific theories in the same fields. The gospel truths are the revealed and eternal standard. They are secure

and absolute. If slivers of the theories of men accord with them, well and good. If whole forests of the postulates of the speculators do not accord, so be it. It is the gospel standard that governs. All things are to be measured against what the Author of Truth has said on whatever point is involved. If he says, for instance, that animals did not die until Adam fell, that issue is settled, and the theories of men must be made to accord with this eternal verity.

As we go forward in our analysis it must also be with the understanding that we do not know all things in the realm of revealed religion. All things have not been revealed, and in our present finite circumstances we could not comprehend them if they were.

We do not know and cannot comprehend how Gods and matter and life first came into being. Suffice it to say, they exist; we are; and created things were created. We do not know and cannot comprehend how the Lord Jesus Christ took upon himself the sins of all men on conditions of repentance, or why, because of his atonement all men shall come forth in the resurrection. Suffice it to say such is the fact. We cannot explain all things either on the basis of revelation or of scientific inquiry. Of course there are fields in which we must withhold judgment until more is known. Of course we cannot speak with divine finality about many things. Of course we are waiting for further light and knowledge from on high.

The fact that many things have not yet been revealed by the Lord or discovered by scientific research is not the issue. We have the promise that when the Lord comes he will reveal all things—"Things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof" (D&C 101:33)—all things shall be revealed in due course. But this does not excuse us from believing what has been revealed, slight as it may be in some instances. Nor does this excuse us from rejecting false theories which conflict with revealed truth, having the specious hope that some new revelation will clarify the issues. No new revelation will ever be received, in time or in eternity, that will conflict in any way with what already has come from heaven to men. All revelations—past, present, and future—will always be in harmony with each other, for all revelations are true.

This word of caution must be expressed. Some things about the creation, fall, and redemption of man, as of now, are speculative even in the realm of religion. These will be identified in the text. Those things which can be set forth with finality will likewise be identified. Other matters which seem to grow out of them will be labeled for what they are. Again it is a matter of choice. Men must choose what they believe, and where the great and eternal gospel verities are concerned those choices will always be made at the peril of losing their salvation.

And know this: The Lord expects us to ponder and pray, to expand our views and seek new knowledge, to try and find answers to all things. We need have no fear about testing all theories, all speculations (whether religious or scientific), and all doctrines. Our purpose is to find truth. And if we can get out of the ruts of the past and thing some new

thought and get some larger visions, how glorious that will be. No man should be afraid to try and test new concepts.

We shall, of course, deal only with those doctrines which pertain to the issues at hand and only in a brief and limited way with many of them. Full expositions on many points are available in my other writings and in the writings of many of the brethren. We shall, however, set forth sufficient in the way of explanations so that a fair and rounded picture of the great concepts to be considered will be before us.

Those who desire to study the theories of men and the “doctrines” of evolution—for such in reality they are—may do so without restraint. A Church which seeks truth from every source; a Church which believes that all truth, whether religious or scientific, as we categorize things, is part and portion of the everlasting gospel; a Church that enthrones truth as the *summum bonum* of all things—such a Church will and does counsel its members to seek diligently, to rightly divide fact from fiction, and to judge all claims by the true gospel standards. These standards have been given to us as the eternal absolutes round which all else must revolve.

One final prefatory word: if we are to succeed we must pay the price of investigation; we must make wise choices; we must hunger and thirst after truth and righteousness. If we are to succeed in our work, we must have open minds, minds seeking truth, minds which are willing to rid themselves of all false concepts. If we are to succeed we must be guided and enlightened by the power of the Holy Spirit of God.