

CHRIST THE SON - OUR FATHER AND OUR GOD

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Man on earth must gain a knowledge of God as his greatest asset in achieving eternal life. This Jesus stressed when He declared: "This is life eternal, that thy might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." ¹ More recently Joseph Smith said:

There are but a very few beings in the world who understand rightly the character of God. The great majority of mankind do not comprehend anything, either that which is past, or that which is to come, as it respects their relationship to God ... and consequently they know but little above the brute beast If a man learns nothing more than to eat, drink and sleep, and does not comprehend any of the designs of God, the beast comprehend the same things If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves. ²

It is not easy to acquire a knowledge of God, for the way is beset by false doctrines and immature opinions; and one must be guided to such knowledge by the Spirit of Truth. At times an immature opinion is a greater obstacle in man's quest than is a false doctrine, for having learned one or two facts concerning Deity we become satisfied and complacent, and cease our search for truth. Because we seldom drink deeply, we also fail to understand our present relationship to God; and we confuse that which is past or that which is to come with our relationship here and now. For instance, at times we formulate our concept of Deity according to the relationship we had with God during our pre-mortal existence, where we had a Father of our spirit bodies who was also our God. Jesus, we stress, was then and now is our elder brother. At other times we view Deity only in light of our anticipated future, where the faithful who enter the highest degree of celestial life become gods. Here L.D.S. philosophy gives birth to the idea of a plurality of Gods. And we sing with meaning the classic lines penned by W. W. Phelps:

If you could hie to Kolob,
In th' twinkling of an eye,
And then continue onward,
With that same speed to fly,

D'ye think that you could ever,
Through all eternity,
Find out the generation
Where Gods began to be? ³

But we must not dwell too much upon the past. Nor should we live only on our expectations of the future. There is a here and now; and man has a distinct relationship with Deity here and now. In this light, Joseph Smith explained that while “there are Gods many and Lords many, ... there is but one God—that is pertaining to us.” Continuing he declared: “the heads of the Gods appointed one God for us.” ⁴ That exalted Personage is Jesus Christ. The *Book of Mormon* was brought forth for the specific purpose of convincing both Jew and Gentile that Christ is “the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.” ⁵ He is “the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” ⁶ He is “the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth.” ⁷ The eternal edict is that except the American gentiles “serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ” they will be brought down to destruction. ⁸ Can it not be said with some degree of truth that when Latter-day Saints do not comprehend their present relationship to Deity they fall under this indictment? Do we not fail to worship Christ as God when we think of Him only as our elder brother who came to earth to be our Redeemer, our Mediator, and our Advocate with His and our pre-mortal Father?

Joseph Smith stated that he had “always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods.” ⁹ Yet, in addition to this basic doctrine, scriptural statements bear ample witness that Christ is our God, and that all truth, power, and authority have been committed to Him. He is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. ¹⁰ In Him all things therefore center, for these points of designation circumscribe all things, as the following declaration also emphasizes: “Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I Am, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; ... the same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes; I am the same which spake, and the world was made, and all things came by me.” ¹¹ During His ministry on earth, Jesus also testified: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father.” ¹² This includes the power to finally judge all things: “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” ¹³ Consequently, the Father never manifests Himself unto man, except He

bears witness of the Son, ¹⁴ for Christ has been ordained to be our God and in Him dwells in power.

Modern revelation clarifies that Christ did not at first receive the glory and power of the Father in their fulness. Instead, He “continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness.” And only when He was endowed with “a fulness of the glory of the Father, did he receive all power, both in heaven and on earth.” ¹⁵ This same revelation clarifies: “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.” ¹⁶ In receiving the Father’s glory, Christ was thus endowed with a fulness of the divine powers of truth and light, or intelligence, that center in the Father. These are powers of life, of light, of truth and of Spirit. They are centered in Christ as a glorified Being and emanate from His presence to fill the immensity of space, as the quickening power in all things. Thus, Christ is declared to be our Lord and our God, whose “Spirit quickeneth all things.” ¹⁷

The glory of God cannot be developed in its fulness in a person in mortality. Only when spirit and element are inseparably connected can one receive a fullness of joy, ¹⁸ which joy is a by-product of a fulness of divine intelligence and power. Hence, Jesus came to earth, died, and was raised from the dead: that He might descend below all things and thus comprehend all things; that the glory and power of the Father might be centered fully in Him; that He might ascend up on high and be in all and through all things, the light of truth, even the God of the earth, having power not merely to create and sustain all things but to redeem and glorify them. Having fulfilled these purposes concerning Himself, He declared: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” ¹⁹ And Paul later wrote: “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” ²⁰

Christ’s glory does not possess a separate identity apart from Himself. Instead, it is an integral part of His divine Being—a manifestation of His attributes and powers. Such attributes, said the First Presidency and many of the Twelve in Brigham Young’s day, “never can be manifest in any world except through organized beings.” ²¹ Hence, Latter-day Saints worship a personal, tangible God, not just an all-pervading essence. On the other hand, they are taught to worship a God of glory, whose divine intelligence and power is as much a part of Him as magnetic powers are part of a magnet. Without His glory, Christ would not be God, even as a magnet without magnetic properties would not be a magnet. Furthermore, because Christ is a Being of glory, He possesses a nature and power that unglorified being do not possess. And thereby He has a relationship with the universe that unglorified beings cannot have or fully appreciate. Like a magnet, Christ

extends Himself by His glory beyond the limits of His tangible body to fill the immensity of space, so that the organized cosmos becomes His tabernacle.

Similarly, because Christ is endowed with the fulness of His Father's glory, the Father is in Him and He is in the Father.²² In his *Lectures on Faith*, Joseph Smith emphasized that the full intelligence and power of the Father centers in the Son, causing both Beings to possess, ... the same mind, the same wisdom, glory, power, and fulness—filling all in all; the Son being filled with the fulness of the *mind*, glory, and power; or, in other words, the spirit, glory, and power, and the same kingdom, sitting at the right hand of power, in the express image and likeness of the Father, mediator for man, being filled with the fulness of the *mind* of the Father; or, in other words, the *Spirit* of the Father.²³

In the quotation above, the word “mind” is significantly equated with the word “spirit.” And the “mind of the Father” is made synonymous with the “Spirit of the Father,” and refers to the quickening glory that dwells in both the Father and the Son. Since the fulness of the Father's glory or divine intelligence dwells in Christ, the Son possesses the same *mind* or *spirit* as the Father, being quickened in the Father and by the Father. Their relationship in glory bears some analogy to an electrical circuit, with the electricity passing through two great poles or centers of power. But here the power element consists of the full forces of life, light, truth, and Spirit in the universe. The fulness of these divine powers of intelligence that center in the Father is extended to the Son, to quicken and endow the Son with the “mind, glory and power” of the Father. Thereby, the two beings are made one, each possessing the same spirit or mind. By this means, the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father.

In his divine relationship with the Father, Christ does not lose His personal identity or will. The inherent nature of the intelligence with which He is endowed prevents such an eventuality. It is a law of existence that all truth is independent within its sphere, as all intelligence also.²⁴ By receiving the Father's glory, the Son therefore became fully independent, possessing all truth and power in the Father's kingdom. Furthermore, the natural affinity that light has to light and that truth has to truth promotes union between the Father and the Son, making them perfectly one. Union, not domination, is thus achieved. The Father and the Son possess two individual wills, but because of His love for truth, the Son voluntarily subordinates Himself to the Father, that the Father's intelligence and power might dwell in Him. It is

largely a matter of communication and agreement. This the Prophet stressed, while commenting on certain biblical texts:

“I am agreed with the Father and the Father is agreed with me, and we are agreed as one.” The Greek shows that it should be agreed. “Father, I pray for them which thou hast given me out of the world, and not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be agreed with us,” and all come to dwell in unity, and in all the glory and everlasting burnings of the Gods.²⁵

Jesus willingly subordinated Himself to His Father in three major relationships to receive the organizations and endowments through which He was given a fulness of the Father’s glory. First, the basic ego of life or intelligence within Him was organized through the process of birth into a spirit person. He thus became a son of God, the Firstborn among other spirit children of the Father.²⁶ And through obedience to the Father’s will, He was endowed with great glory and power, sufficient to create and sustain life on this and other spheres. Again, Jesus was subordinate to the Father in acquiring a body of flesh and bones; and as the Only Begotten of the Father, He was “the Son, because of the flesh.”²⁷ Finally, Christ was subordinate to the Father in acquiring the divine powers of truth and light by which He was glorified and arose to the status of Deity. He partook largely of these powers before coming to mortality, but only when He came forth from the grave and ascended to the Father did He receive them in their fulness. And by these endowments, He became the Son of God in glory. As expressed in a revelation: “He was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fullness at the first.”²⁸

Because Christ is subordinate to His Father in glory, He is called the Son. But having received a fulness of that divine intelligence, Christ stands as the center of life, of truth, and of power for all things that have been committed into His hands. In this divine relationship, He is the Father of all life. Thus, Christ, the Son, is the God and the Father of all things, even “the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth, and all things which in them are.”²⁹ In this light, Isaiah looked forward to Christ’s coming and foretold that a son would be born whose name would be called, “Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father.”³⁰ Of Himself Christ declared:

... whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good . . . For behold, *I am the Father, I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world.*³¹

We often speak of Christ in His relationship with His Father. Here He is the Son, in the three ways listed above. But more than this, we must understand Christ's relationship to man and to all things associated with this earth and its heaven. Here, Jesus is the center of life, even the God and the Father of all things. Children are alive in Christ, being redeemed of Him as their Father. But when they become accountable before Him and transgress His divine laws, they must be born again into a new spiritual relationship with Him, thereby becoming the sons and daughters of Christ through the power of His Gospel. To the brother of Jared, the pre-mortal Christ explained:

Behold I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have light, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters.³²

Thus, the fatherhood of Christ is expressed in several ways, each of which is derived from the fact that Christ is the Father because, having received a fulness of His Father's glory, He manifests the powers of divine glory unto others. In a revelation he explained: "I am ... the Father because he [His Father] gave me of his fulness."³³

By virtue of His divine endowments, Christ manifested Himself unto man as both the Father and the Son, or, simultaneously as the Father and the Son. To the brother of Jared He first appeared in the office of the Son and declared: "Never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast."³⁴ As the Father, He manifested Himself to Enoch and revealed His future as Christ on earth and His ascension into heaven. Enoch exclaimed to the Personage before him: "Forasmuch as thou are God, and I know thee, and thou hast sworn unto me, and commanded me that I should ask in the name of thine Only Begotten; ... wherefore, I ask thee [the Father] if thou [the Son] wilt not come again on the earth." Enoch then beheld "the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years."³⁵

In the sense of possessing the eternal fulness, there are but two Beings who control all things in our universe. Wrote the Prophet:

There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things, by whom all things were created and made, that are created and made, whether visible or invisible, whether in heaven, on earth, or in the earth, under the earth, or throughout the immensity of space. They are the Father and the Son.³⁶

For all things related to man, the power and intelligence of both of these divine Beings is centered in Christ. This includes the power manifest through that Personage called the Holy Ghost. Though He is associated with the Father and the Son, the Holy Ghost is a Person of Spirit Tabernacle only, and as such cannot possess a fulness of eternal glory and power. He is not an executive of similar power to Christ, but is referred to as “the witness or Testator.”³⁷ Though He speaks for the Father and the Son, His mission is to witness, teach, testify, and dispense the truths and powers of that Being unto men.³⁸ Jesus, Himself explained:

He [the Comforter] shall glorify me: for *he shall receive of mine*, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that *he shall take of mine*, and shall shew it unto you.³⁹

As a personal Spirit, the Holy Ghost is associated with Christ and reveals the truths and powers of Christ unto man. Thus, Christ declared in a revelation concerning Edward Partridge: “I will lay my hand upon you by the hand of my servant Sidney Rigdon, and you shall receive *my Spirit*, the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which shall teach you the peaceable things of the kingdom.”⁴⁰ The companionship of the Holy Ghost that is promised to worthy Saints who partake of the Lord’s Supper is also referred to as Christ’s Spirit.⁴¹ And the *Book of Mormon* asserts that those spiritual endowments commonly called the gifts of the Holy Ghost “come by the Spirit of Christ.”⁴²

The *Book of Mormon* records the fact that Christ is the son of a divine Being, to whom He prayed as His Father and to whom man should also address his prayers, in the name of Christ.⁴³ The Nephite Scripture also gives evidence of the existence of the Holy Ghost as the third Person in the Godhead.⁴⁴ But in its basic doctrine of God, the Book of Mormon stresses that Christ, the Son, is man’s God and Father. This doctrine was illustrated very well when Zeezrom inquired of Amulek:

“Thou sayest there is a true and living God?”

And Amulek replied, “Yea, there is a true and living God.”

Zeezrom then extended his inquiry further with the question: “Is there more than one God?”

To this Amulek declared pointedly, “No.” And when questioned on how he knew of such things, Amulek replied: “An angel hath made them known unto me.”

This answer should have settled the matter, but Zeezrom had now arrived at the real point of issue. So he came promptly to the problem: “Who is he that shall come? It is the Son of God?”

And, unhesitatingly, Amulek said unto him, “Yea.”

But the apparent contradiction was clarified when Zeezrom finally asked, “Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father?”

Amulek then explained the Nephite concept of God, stating of Christ, “Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth, and all things which in them are; he is the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and he shall come into the world to redeem his people...”⁴⁵

Continuing on the same theme, Amulek implied that the fulness of the Godhead is centered in Christ, who manifests Himself through all the offices therein. Thus, he declared that in the judgment, men will be “arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, to be judged according to their works.”⁴⁶ The phrase “is one God,” as distinct from “are one God,” emphasizes that the singular person, Christ, manifests Himself through the offices of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For Amulek to have meant otherwise would have been a denial of his positive assertion that there is but one God. It would also do violence to the consistent doctrine taught in the *Book of Mormon* that Christ is “the great Jehovah, the Eternal judge of both quick and dead.”⁴⁷ Amulek himself refers to Christ as God, into whose hands the judgment is committed.⁴⁸ There is no support in the Nephite Scripture for the idea that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as three separate and distinct persons, will *sit* to judge the world.

Thus, “God Himself”⁴⁹ came to earth “to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son.”⁵⁰ He was “the Father, because he was conceived by the power of God”⁵¹ and because the Father gave him “of his fullness.”⁵² But Christ was also “The Son,” said He, “because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men.”⁵³ When Philip failed to understand that by right of the indwelling intelligence which Christ received from His Eternal Sire, He was the Father, Jesus exclaimed:

Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but *the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*⁵⁴

This doctrine seems to have been better understood by the Nephite prophets. Abinadi made its classic exposition in the following statement:

... I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—And they [the Father and the Son in Christ] are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth. And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people. ... Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son [the flesh] being swallowed up in the will of the Father [the Spirit of indwelling intelligence]. And thus God breaketh the bonds of death. ... ⁵⁵

Christ's divine role as the Father and the Son is also emphasized in the Inspired Revision of the *Bible*. By the spirit of revelation, Joseph Smith corrected a statement by Christ to read that no man knoweth "the Father, save the Son, and they to whom the Son will reveal himself, *they shall see the Father also*." ⁵⁶

Again, even more pointedly, Jesus declared in another passage: "All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth that the Son is the Father, and the Father is the Son, but him to whom he Son will reveal it." ⁵⁷ May God bless all men to be worthy of the revelation of that truth, as necessary knowledge to be acquired along the pathway to eternal life.

Endnotes

1. John 17:3.
2. *History of the Church*, VI, p. 303.
3. *Latter-day Saint Hymnal*, No. 257.
4. *History of the Church*, VI, pp. 474-476.
5. Title Page of the *Book of Mormon*.
6. I Nephi 19:10.
7. III Nephi 11:14. See also I Nephi 19:13.
8. Ether 2:12.
9. *History of the Church*, VI, p. 474.- See also D. & C. 130:22.
10. Revelation 1:11, 17-18; 2:8; 22:13; D. & C. 35:1; 110:4.
11. D. & C. 38:1-3.

12. Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 16:15.
13. John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:31.
14. See Inspired Revision, John 1:19.
15. D. & C. 93:12-17.
16. D. & C. 93:36.
17. D. & C. 33:1, 16.
18. D. & C. 93:33.
19. Matthew 28:18.
20. Colossians 2:9. See also Colossians 1:19; Ephesians 1:23.
21. *Deseret News*, XIV (August 23, 1865), pp. 372-373.
22. John 17:20-23; D. & C. 93:17, 10.
23. Fifth Lecture. (Italics by the writer.)
24. See D. & C. 93:30.
25. *History of the Church*, VI, p. 476.
26. See D. & C. 93:21, 22, 29; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 3:14.
27. Mosiah 15:3; III Nephi 1:14; Moses 6:57; 7:35.
28. D. & C. 93:12-14.
29. See Alma 11:38-39; II Nephi 25:12; Mosiah 3:8; 15:4; 16:15; Helaman 14:12 Mormon 6:21-22.
30. Isaiah 9:6.
31. Ether 4:12. (Italics by the writer.)
32. Ether 3:14.
33. D. & C. 93:3-4.
34. Ether 3:14-15. Note the specific references to the fact that this was Jesus who appeared, in verses 17, 19, and 20 The writer is indebted to his colleague F. Kent Nielsen for drawing his attention to this view of a heretofore puzzling statement.
35. Moses 7:59-65.
36. *Lectures on Faith*, No. 5. George Q. Cannon also referred to Christ as “one of the two Personages that form the Godhead.”—*The Deseret Weekly*, XXXVIII (April 7, 1889). pp. 675-676.
37. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City, 1938), p. 190.
38. Consider the following: “And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou has failed thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.”—Moses 5:9
39. John 16:14-15. (Italics by the writer.)

- ^{40.} D. & C. 36:2. (Italics by the writer.)
- ^{41.} See the Sacramental prayers as given in D. & C. 20:77-49; Moroni 4 & 5.
- ^{42.} Moroni 10:17.
- ^{43.} See II Nephi 31:11-15; III Nephi 9:15; 11:7-11, 25, 32, 35-; 19.
- ^{44.} See I Nephi 11:11; III Nephi 11:25, 32.
- ^{45.} Alma 11:26-40.
- ^{46.} Alma 11:44 (Italics by the writer.) See also II Nephi 31:21; “The Testimony of Three Witnesses.” Mormon 7:7 originally made reference to this doctrine, but in later editions was changed to “are one god,” thus expressing our more popular version.
- ^{47.} Moroni 10:27, 34. See also II Nephi 33:11; Mosiah 16:9-10; Mormon 9:13-14.
- ^{48.} Alma 12:14-15.
- ^{49.} Mosiah 13:28; 34; 15:1.
- ^{50.} III Nephi 1:14; Mormon 9:12.
- ^{51.} Mosiah 15:3.
- ^{52.} D. & C. 93:4.
- ^{53.} D. & C. 93:4.
- ^{54.} John 14:6-10. (Italics by the writer.)
- ^{55.} Mosiah 15:1-5, 7-8.
- ^{56.} Inspired Revision, Matthew 11:28. (Italics by the writer.)
- ^{57.} Inspired Revision. Luke 10:23.