

# The Eternal Nature of the Intelligence of Spirits

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## Body and Spirit

The physical bodies of Adam and Eve and their posterity are composed of the elements (dust) of this earth, this composition is necessary to be governed by the laws of nature that pertain to all life. However, the element of spirit that animates this physical body is a different matter. (No pun intended).

7 There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes;

8 We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter. (D&C 131:7-8)

The “matter” of which our spirits are comprised is something that science has yet to determine, or scripture yet to discuss other than explaining that it is light and truth:

23 *Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;*

24 *And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come;*

26 *The Spirit of truth is of God. . .*

27 *And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments.*

28 *He (the spirit, vs. 32) that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.*

29 *Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.*

30 *All truth (even the spirit of 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.*

31 *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.*

32 *And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation.*

33 *For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy; (D&C 93:23, 24, 26-33)*

Every spirit has the freedom to “act for itself” in every environment or sphere that it might be placed. Because of this, the nature or character the spirit becomes, it becomes by choice and knowledge, without compulsion or constraint. The spirit will develop the nature and character that it has chosen to become. The spirit will create itself by seeking for, receiving and being obedient to light and truth, or be satisfied with the darkness of a terrestrial or telestial nature and existence.

## Questions

Research has shown that questions must be answered. If the questions are sincere, the mind has a need to know the answers, and if not answered by truth, then error will suffice, or the mind will make up an

answer to satisfy the need.<sup>1</sup> When teaching for CES (Church Educational System) it was taught that as the teacher “we should answer the question the student should have asked” rather than the question he might be concerned about. Before the internet age where information and answers are a click away, every question is an important question, and that is especially true for the youth. To Google a question today will fill the page not with the answers from the LDS concerned community but will give the seeker page after page of anti-Mormon answers and propaganda to more questions than they realized they had. The Baby Boomers were satisfied when told that the questions they were asking were not “pertinent to their salvation” or that ‘it is something they don’t need to know right now.’ The generations of the Internet age will not be satisfied with the “you don’t need to know that right now” to placate their ignorance and lack of understanding.

The non-LDS religions that attract the youth from the LDS Faith are those that answer their questions from the scriptures, even if the answers are in error, and are without the benefit of modern prophets and latter-day scripture. Many LDS youth who seek answers to their questions (and all questions are important to the one who asks) when unanswered, prefer not to believe in anything, or trust in their own interpretation of religion and faith. When asked: “what was God doing before he created the world?” one religious reformer responded, “creating a hell for those who asked that question.” Latter-day Saints constantly tout the scriptural adage of: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7) while negating the following passage: “For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matthew 7:8) is the Lord’s response to those who are sincerely seeking truth; but some think it necessary to add “not in this life.” For years “prescribed” (correlated) knowledge has worked to control mankind by many institutions. However, the ‘day of the dictator is over’ (as seen in the current news reports) because of the internet and the ability and speed to convey information, no matter if true or false. Generations X, Y and Millennium will not wait, or be satisfied with unanswered questions. There is no way out of the ‘information age’ and the ‘arm of flesh’ is not to be trusted, and a bad answer is better than no answer at all. In some way, the youth and every member must be jarred awake, to the realization that the scriptures are the standards of truth and doctrine. Teachers must answer the questions from the scriptures to help create and recognize the authority of those ‘Standard Works’ in the hearts of the rising generations. This can only be done when their questions are answered and answered from the scriptures.

## **The Eternal Spirit**

When the theory of evolution was becoming a mainstay in the classroom and was taught, not as a ‘theory’ but as pure science, the position of some Church leaders took a defensive position. There was a need to defend the reality of God and the divine nature and creation of mankind’s mind and body. This goal led to the many traditions about the origin of the spirit of man. Because of scriptural verses like 1 John 3:2 that begins: “beloved, now are we the sons of God” the traditions were fostered that all spirits were a direct result of some type of heavenly birth process.

Calling God, “Father,” produces the same images in the mind about relationships in the realm of the Gods, that exist on earth. How can anything else be thought than that with which we are most familiar. The origin of the spirit and the eternal nature of that spirit has been a matter of discussion that has found its way into the daily life of the member, as it should have. Songs such as “I am a Child of God” are favorites, not only of children but also adults. We seek to perceive or move this life as we know it, into the pre-earth and post-earth environments, because this life is that of which we are familiar. Hence, what happens here on earth, man naively believes that the same processes and lifestyles exist in the hereafter. Paul explains what lies in the hereafter, and no doubt even before, “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered in the heart of man.” Mankind without direct revelation, are incapable of not only knowing, but even imagining what the eternities are like.

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<sup>1</sup> Watson, Lyall, *Supernature* (N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1973), p. 239

The concept of 'spirit children' creates many different visions and opinions in the mind, that many have tried to justify and explain over the years. These differing opinions often lead to contradictions with well meaning leaders and commentaries. Many opinions and traditions disagree with scripture and even Joseph Smith's comments and commentary on doctrines presented in scripture. Some have put words in the mouth of the Prophet Joseph explaining what he really meant to say. Others will blatantly miss-quote the meaning of scriptures to support opinions and traditions of understanding. These differing opinions create questions that are more often than not, left unanswered. As a teacher I have seen many students, youth and adults who feel bewildered in doctrinal understanding, and are sometimes unable to conform what is being traditionally taught with scripture. Conversely, when the student understands the doctrines from scripture, they often wonder why they were never taught those concepts, by their teachers at church.

There are many questions that stem from doctrines and statements that are difficult to understand or conceptualize when it comes to the origin and nature of 'spirit children.' The concepts discussed below, are not meant to seem blasphemous, nor are they meant to seem questioning, contradictory or corrective to traditional thought, doctrine or statement. The questions listed below are those that have been presented to me and asked by youth as well as adults. Choosing to ignore the frequency and reality of these interrogatives, does not mean; that the questions do not exist. If they are being asked vocally the questions are formulated in the mind and important to the one asking them.

Traditional thoughts of the origin of the spirit, even though unspoken, creates in the mind, a number of questions that no one wants to answer. There exist inherent presumptions to basic doctrines about the origin of the spirit, which lead to logical questions. The first summation is that if there is a Heavenly Father, then there must be a Heavenly Mother. The experiential logic continues: these Celestial Parents then must have some sort of physical relation which produce spirit children that are then born in the pre-earth existence. (since this is the way it is done here, surely it MUST be done the same way there) The questions below have been asked me by Seminary and Institute students based on doctrinal statements and traditions taught them from their youth. It was taught recently by a presenter and teacher at BYU 'Education Week:' that Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother came to the newly created earth and partook of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, so that they could give birth to the physical body of Adam. Wow, think of the ramifications that this teacher of religion spawned in the minds of the listeners! But it must be true because it came from a teacher at the BYU taught at the Church sponsored 'Education Week.'" Nonetheless, a few of the questions that surround the topic of the origin of spirits, are presented below:

1. If spirit children are born in the pre-earth, is there then, a pre-existence to the pre-earth?
2. Are spirit children that are born to Heavenly Parents infantile in appearance, or are they adult at their spiritual birth?
3. Do spirits need to grow up before they come to earth?
4. Does Mother in Heaven need to be pregnant?
5. If pregnant, how long is gestation?
6. Is the birth of spirit children painful?
7. Does a Mother in Heaven have to give birth to all the spirits that will come to an earth?
8. If there is a spirit birth what animates the spirit?

The list can go on and on; each question becoming evermore difficult to answer. These questions exist, because man must, by nature, assume that the next life is like this one, (not that it really is). The dilemma for some, is how to demand that members believe in a concept or doctrine that has been given a particular explanation, and at the same time expect them *not* to have questions. The plan that was rejected in our pre-earth life, was the plan to "destroy the agency of man" in order "that one soul shall not be lost" (Moses 4:1, 3). But the questions will always exist, if teachings dictate that Heavenly Parents gave birth to our spirits. The youth today will not settle for a non-answer in any form.

To begin to answer questions like those listed above, the statements of Joseph Smith should be read and reviewed to lay a foundation of understanding from which to build. The Prophet's remarks are going to be decidedly different than which is or has been traditionally taught. Please bear with the seemingly contradictory commentary by Joseph Smith until the end of this discussion. Again, as the "Forward" of this book explains, no chapter, including this one, is meant to change or correct any doctrine or statements made by any leader of the Church. This is just food for thought, hoping that one might realize that there could be more to understand than what one might learn in the fifteen-year-old Sunday School class (which of course, is the same manual as the adult Gospel Doctrine).

The teachings and words of Joseph Smith, that have been available to members of the Church for over a century, are used in this article to present the Prophet's views and revelations on the origin of our spirits. In the past there have been 'footnotes' and explanations added to his statements in an effort to legitimize later traditions and teachings that have become more prevalent in Mormon thought. This has been especially true, as the theories of Darwinism and evolution begin to be taught in the civil and higher educational institutions, and the origin of man became an important subject for the Latter-day Saint student.

## **Eternal Spirit**

The following few pages will review what the scriptures and the Prophet Joseph Smith say about the origin of the spirits of mankind and the eternal nature of those spirits. This text will not add 'footnotes of explanation' to the words of Joseph Smith; and will to the dismay some, let Joseph speak for himself.

It was decided, by a commentator, after the death of Joseph Smith that the "intelligence" spoken of was a separate and distinct entity from the spirit of mankind. Of course, knowing by scripture and revelation, that a "spirit" animates the physical body, the assumption was made, that the "intelligence" was the entity that became the animating force of spirits which were then born to Heavenly Parents. This conclusion consequently created a necessary pre-existence to the pre-earth. This commentary, though not a doctrine, nor presented in scripture or by the Prophet Joseph, has become a traditional explanation and assumed doctrine, found in almost all commentaries.

Tradition is often; no, that should be "always," stronger than doctrine and scripture. Because of that, it would be suggested that an open mind be kept as the scriptures and the statements of Joseph Smith are reviewed below.

Making a connection between Christ and man, the Savior declares that he "was in the beginning with the father, and am the Firstborn" (vs. 21) and continuing that "I am the Spirit of truth" (vs. 26). The scriptures do give some indication of the origin of our spirits and the eternal nature of our existence. "Spirit, Spirit of truth, intelligence, light and truth" seem to be used to identify the same entity in scripture, and without a doubt, in the statements of the Prophet Joseph.

In May of 1833 Joseph Smith received the revelation known as Section Ninety-three in the Doctrine and Covenants. This early revelation explains that all spirits, "were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth" connecting "Spirit" and "Spirit of truth" (D&C 93:23). The next five verses, are instructional *insert verses*, that discuss "truth" by teaching the reader, that *a spirit* can obtain *a fullness of truth* by obedience (vs. 27, 28). These verses explain that the spirit of man has the *potential* to receive a fullness of light and truth, as they are: "Spirit of truth." This will be discussed below as the Prophet Joseph explains that every spirit has the capability for 'enlargement.' These *insert verses* are making a *commentarial bridge and connection* between verse 23, and verse 29.

23 *Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;*  
 29 *Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.* (D&C 93:23, 29)

This is easily seen by identifying the phrases in each verse a connection to the same existence of Christ. This implies that what He (Christ) did we can do also in the process of receiving a ‘fulness of light and truth, ‘receiving ‘grace for grace and moving from grace to grace’ (D&C 93:12, 13, 20).

D&C 93 Christ	D&C 93:23 Man	D&C 93:29 Man
21. I was in the beginning with the Father,  I am more intelligent than they all. (Abraham 3:19)  26 The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth	Ye were also in the beginning with the Father;  that which is Spirit,  even the Spirit of truth;	Man was also in the beginning with God.  Intelligence,  or the light of truth,
<i>spirits have no beginning; for they are eternal. (Abr. 3:18</i>	<i>was not created or made, neither indeed can be.</i>	

Returning to the origin of the spirit, the Lord continues with the thought of verse 23 quoted above that the ‘spirit’ or the light of truth, *was not created or made, neither indeed can be*” (D&C 93:29). This ‘Spirit of truth, intelligence or the light of truth’ was never created nor can be. It is eternal, self existing, even though the spirit may not have yet a “fulness of light and truth” until it has learned to be obedient to the light and truth it has received. Verse 29 implies that the “intelligence” and spirit are one and the same, if the “light and truth” is the same as “Spirit of truth” in verse 23.

In the Book of Abraham, the Lord makes it clear to the patriarch that spirits are eternal.

18 *Howbeit that he made the greater star; as, also, if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal.* (Abraham 3:18)

The Lord explains to Abraham that it is nature of “spirits” that some are more “*intelligent*” than others. This “*intelligence*” between spirits has nothing to do with IQ, or being smarter than one another, as will be explained. The Lord then teaches Abraham, that these “spirits” have “existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after for they are eternal.” Almost the same words as Section 93 of the Doctrine and Covenants. After the review of the statements of the Prophet Joseph on the eternal nature of the spirit of man, the term “*intelligence,*” will be addressed in relation to the spirit and it’s scriptural meaning.

### **Nobel and Great Spirits**

In 1839 Joseph Smith, teaching some of the Apostles before their mission emphasized the scriptural teaching of the eternal nature of the spirit of man:

*The spirit of man is not a created being: it existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity. Anything created cannot be eternal...Our Savior speaks of children and says, ‘Their angels [spirits] always stand*

before my Father.’ *The Father called all spirits before Him at the creation of man, and organized them.*  
He (Adam) is the head...<sup>2</sup>

Again the Prophet teaches that the spirit is eternal and that at the time of the creation (not of spirits, but physical body of man, see “The Council and War in Heaven” chapter above) he called all spirits before Him to “organize them” and placed Adam at the head. This ‘organization’ is not the creation of the spirit, but an organization into leaders and perhaps specific families. Abraham is taught by the Lord about this organization also.

22 Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the *intelligences that were organized* before the world was; and among all these *there were many of the noble and great ones*;

23 And God saw *these souls that they were good*, and he *stood in the midst of them*, and he said: *These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits*, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. (Abraham 3:22-23)

Commentaries normally explain, in a traditional way, by writing that the ‘intelligences’ were “*organized*” into spirits rather than letting the scripture explain itself. The text is clear enough when seen from the viewpoint, that this “*organization*” was a priesthood or patriarchal organization. The “intelligences” that were organized were the “noble and great ones” and the God saw that these “noble and great ones” were “good” (vs. 23). The verse then explains that he stood in the “midst of them” or the “souls” that were good. To make sure that there can be no misunderstanding the Lord then repeats himself for a better explanation of the ‘organization;’ “these,” said God, “I will make my rulers; for he *stood among those that were spirits*, and he saw that they were good.” Looking at the nouns, pronouns and demonstratives it is easy to see the relationship among all, and particular the relationship between “intelligences” and the “spirits” that God stood among. The organization was revealed, and Abraham understood that he was one of the noble and great spirits or intelligences, before the world was. This is a connection that is made in Alma Chapter Thirteen that most readers fail to see. Alma’s discussion is an explanation of what Abraham explains as the organization of the noble and great spirits and families, for the priesthood leaders for the earth that will be foreordained to teach light and truth to the other spirits that come to this world. Most readers of Alma assume that the High Priests spoken of are the regular ‘high priests’ found in every Stake and Ward, but it is not so. These are those called, chosen, and set apart to be the leaders, prophets, and patriarchs as was Abraham. These are not the members of the high priest or Elders quorums in the Stake as is often taught. As a High Priest, I am not nor do I personally know any High Priests that should be classified as the same character and order of the patriarch Abraham. Alma uses the words to represent the pre-earth life and council of heaven like: “cite your minds forward” and even the words of Abraham and speaks of “in the first place” to mean the same as the ‘first estate’ that Abraham speaks of.

[Commentary within the verses below and will be bracketed.]

1 And again, my brethren, I would *cite your minds forward* to the time

*[“forward to the time” is before now, to cite your minds to the past, and could mean history or pre-earth]*

when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people.

2 And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.

3 And this is the manner after which they were ordained—*being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works*;

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<sup>2</sup> TPJS, p. 158

*[Alma teaches the same as Abraham records: that there were those of exceeding great faith, or 'noble and great spirits' that were prepared to be the leaders on earth]*

in the *first place* [pre-earth life] being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling *which was prepared* with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.

4 And thus *they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith*, while others [on the earth] would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren.

5 Or in fine, *in the first place* [in the pre-earth] they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling being *prepared from the foundation of the world* [foreordained] for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared—

6 And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained [foreordained before the foundation of the earth] unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest—[all things are done in the pre-earth]

7 . . . being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things—

8 Now they were ordained after this manner—*being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance*, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end—

9 Thus *they become high priests forever*, [before earth life, in live on the earth and after life on the earth] after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen. (Alma 13:1-9)

These verses discuss the calling and setting apart of the spirits of high priests in the Melchizedek Priesthood that were to become the prophets and patriarchs, the priesthood leaders that were to become the leaders on the earth were foreordained in the pre-earth council before Adam is placed in the Garden of Eden. The Prophet Joseph speaks of this council in heaven, by stating:

Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heavens before the world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in the Grand Council.<sup>3</sup>

Again, the Prophet speaks of the spirit or soul having an eternal nature and the council in heaven again:

*If the soul of man had a beginning it will surely have an end...The first step in salvation of man is the laws of eternal and self-existent principles. Spirits are eternal. At the first organization in heaven we were all present and saw the Savior chosen and appointed.*<sup>4</sup>

The first General Conference of 1844 the Prophet Joseph Smith gave one of the most enlightening discourses on eternal doctrines found outside of scripture itself. Much of his talk focused on the Eternal Nature of the Spirit. The text below will present the Prophet's doctrinal explanation on the spirit of man. The paragraphs pertaining to the subject spirits will be presented below, with each paragraph lettered for future reference. It is suggested that one let Joseph speak for himself without putting words into his mouth. When this is done there are windows of understanding opened, because Joseph teaches nothing but what can be found in the scriptures. Most of what is quoted below can be found in the Relief Society/Priesthood Manual of the Teachings of Joseph Smith, Chapter Seventeen. Following each paragraph will be a brief synopsis of important insights found in that passage.

A. I have another subject to dwell upon, which is calculated to exalt man; but it is impossible for me to say much on this subject. *I shall therefore just touch upon it*, for time will not permit me to say all. It is associated with the subject of the resurrection of the dead,--namely, *the soul--the mind of man--the*

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 365

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* P. 181.

*immortal spirit.* Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; but *it is not so*: the very idea lessens man in my estimation. I do not believe the doctrine; I know better. Hear it, all ye ends of the world; *for God has told me so*; and if you don't believe me, it will not make the truth without effect... *I am going to tell of things more noble.*<sup>5</sup>

First, Joseph implies that the “soul, the mind, the immortal spirit” are all the same by using the singular “it” in his question. He then chides those who say that God created the spirit of man, with an emphatic “it is not so.” Joseph then reassures his listeners that this is true by stating “for God has told me so;” warning that he is moving from the ‘milk to the meat’ explaining that he is “going to tell of things more noble.”

B. We say that *God himself is a self-existent being.* Who told you so? *It is correct enough*; but how did it get into you heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? *Man does exist upon the same principles. God made a tabernacle and put a spirit into it, and it became a living soul.* (Refers to the old Bible.) How does it read in the Hebrew? *It does not say in the Hebrew that God created the spirit of man. It says "God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam's spirit, and so became a living body."*<sup>6</sup>

The Prophet explains that not only is “God himself a self-existent being” but also man “exists upon the same principles.” He then takes to task a commentary on the creation account of man. Joseph teaches that “God made a tabernacle and put a spirit into it” emphasizing the nature of the spirit by continuing the scriptural context with: “It does not say...that God created the spirit of man” quoting the Hebrew Bible. “It says” states Joseph, that “God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam’s spirit” focusing attention on the eternal and uncreated nature of man’s spirit.

C. *The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is co-equal with God himself. I know that my testimony is true;*<sup>7</sup>

Again, as Joseph responded in the first paragraph, the Prophet connects the ‘mind, spirit and intelligence’ as the same, but then adds that this aspect of man has been in existence as long as God’s spirit has. Joseph then testifies the second time that he knows that these concepts are true.

D. I am dwelling on the *immortality of the spirit of man.* Is it logical to say that *the intelligence of spirits* is immortal, and yet that it had a beginning? *The intelligence of spirits had not beginning, neither will it have an end.* That is good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. *There never was a time when there were not spirits; for they are co-equal [co-eternal] with our Father in heaven.*<sup>8</sup>

The doctrines being taught in this sermon open the windows and doors of understanding as the Prophet teaches about the “immortality of the spirit of man.” He raises the question; Could spirit have a beginning? He then answers with a phrase that begins the explanation of the term, ‘intelligence.’ “The *intelligence of spirits* had not beginning, neither will it have an end” as Joseph answers his own question. The “intelligence of spirits” is a phrase that connects, what is generally considered two entities, into one. (this will be addressed later) Joseph explains; if a ‘spirit had a beginning it will have an end,’ in other words, if there is a birth or creation there will be a death or annihilation of that spirit. He concludes the paragraph by reinforcing the concept; that there have always been spirits, there is no creation about it, for the spirit of men have existed as long as God’s spirit has.

E. I want to *reason more on the spirit of man*; for I am dwelling on the body and *spirit of man*--on the subject of the dead. I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto *the mind of man--the immortal part, because it has no beginning.* Suppose you cut it in two; then it has a beginning and an end; but join it

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<sup>5</sup> TPJS, p. 352.

<sup>6</sup> TPJS, pp. 352, 353.

<sup>7</sup> TPJS, p.353

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*



again, and it continues one eternal round. *So with the spirit of man. As the Lord liveth, if it had a beginning, it will have an end.* All the fools and learned and wise men from the beginning of creation, *who say that the spirit of man had a beginning, prove that it must have an end;* and if that doctrine is true, then the doctrine of annihilation would be true. But if I am right, *I might with boldness proclaim from the house-tops that God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all.* God himself could not create himself.<sup>9</sup>

This subject that the Prophet Joseph Smith takes so much time explaining, could be considered a commentary to the scriptures found in Section Ninety-three of the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Abraham about the eternal nature of the spirit. In the preceding paragraph, he begins in such a way to make clear this subject, without mistaking what the focus is, by stating again that he is speaking “more on the spirit of man” and that he is “dwelling” on the “spirit of man.” Emphasizing again that the “mind of man--the immortal part” the spirit, “has no beginning,” while using the example of his ring. Declaring once more the eternal nature of the spirit, Joseph uses these words: “So with the spirit of man. As the Lord liveth if it had a beginning, it will have an end.” The Prophet confirms that those who believe the spirit had a beginning, prove by their logic, that the spirit will cease to exist; and that it would not be immortal. With feeling, commitment and testimony, Joseph cries “I might with boldness proclaim from the house-tops” (a doctrine, not often taught) “that *God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all.*”

*F. Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it. All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement.*<sup>10</sup>

“Intelligence” is eternal “It is a spirit from age to age and there is no creation about it.” Joseph could not make himself or the doctrine of the eternal nature of the spirit, more clear. It, the spirit of man, was not and cannot be created for the “intelligence of spirits had no beginning” (para. D). Joseph has made it clear that the spirit and intelligence are connected as one entity. The Prophet uses the phrase the “intelligence of spirit” which is similar to the message found in the Book of Abraham, which manuscript he had been working on at the time he gave this doctrinal sermon. In paragraph F above, Joseph moves into the definition and connection of what the ‘intelligence of spirit’ means. He concludes the above paragraph (F) by stating that the ‘intelligence, the minds, the spirits’ that “God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement.” This sets the stage for the definition of the word “intelligence” found in the scriptures.

## **Intelligence of Spirits**

A few years before The King Follett discourse, the Prophet spoke of the spirit’s progression by knowledge, and the propensity for the increase of: defined “intelligence.”

We consider that *God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him.* But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment: he must have been instructed in the government and laws of that kingdom *by proper degrees, until his mind is capable in some measure of comprehending the propriety, justice, equality, and consistency of the same.*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *TPJS*, p. 354

<sup>10</sup> *TPJS*, p. 354

<sup>11</sup> *TPJS*, p. 51.

This statement by Joseph Smith above, is a definition of the ‘intelligence of the spirit’ and the result of seeking, receiving and being obedient to light and truth through diligence and obedience which creates the “principle of intelligence” that remains with the spirit through death and into eternity.

18 Whatever principle of *intelligence* we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.  
19 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.* (D&C 130:18-19)

Abraham instructed by the Lord, is told that spirits have different levels of ‘intelligence’ when compared one to another:

18 ...if there be two spirits, and *one shall be more intelligent* than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding *one is more intelligent than the other*, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal.  
19 And the Lord said unto me: These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, *one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all.* (Abraham 3:18-19)

Most scriptural commentaries separate the terms; “*intelligence and intelligent*’ found here and in Section Ninety-three. Yet, Joseph Smith uses them interchangeably and always as the definition of the spirit as in his discussion above. The Prophet Joseph connects these terms with the spirit as does the Lord in the verses above speaking of spirits of differing intelligence. Joseph in paragraph (D) above uses the term “intelligence of spirit” making the same connection as found in Abraham. The Lord then confirms to Abraham that He stood among the spirits (vs. 18-19) stating:

21 I dwell in the midst of them [spirits of verses 18, 19] all; I now, therefore, have come down unto thee to declare unto thee the works which my hands have made, wherein my wisdom excelleth them all, for I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, in all wisdom and prudence, over all the intelligences thine eyes have seen from the beginning; I came down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen. (Abraham 3:21)

The Patriarch Abraham is taught by the Lord that among the “intelligences that were organized. . . there were many of the noble and great ones” (Abraham 3:22). These more “intelligent” souls were good, or more prepared for “he stood among those that were *spirits*, and he saw that they were good” God identifies Abraham as one of them. “These I will make my rulers. . . Abraham, thou are one of them; thou wast chosen before thou was born” (Abraham 3:22, 23).

The question must be asked what makes one spirit become more intelligent than another? What is the ‘intelligence of the spirit’ that sets them apart from the others, and prepares them to be the prophets and patriarchs on earth, for the rest of them? Perhaps the scriptural definition of the word “intelligent or intelligence of the spirit” should be given to have in mind as the passages of scripture and the statements of Joseph are reviewed.

The definition of the “intelligence of the spirit” or that which makes “one spirit more intelligent than another” in scripture is: *The spirit’s ability to seek for, receive, and be obedient to light and truth.* (Keep this definition in mind as the discussion and scriptures are presented below.) Hence, the Prophet Joseph could talk about, as did Abraham, the “intelligence of the spirit.” In paragraph ‘F’ above and ‘G’ below, Joseph teaches that “all the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement” and he continues that our relationship with God “places us in a situation to advance in knowledge.” The Prophet continues by stating that God “instituted laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with Himself.” This means that they (the intelligence of spirits) have the ability to receive more light and truth. Those who have proven in the pre-earth, as a spirit, that they have a propensity to seek for, receive,

and be obedient to light and truth, have a greater ‘intelligence’ and are chosen to be the principle priesthood leaders on earth. Intelligence is the propensity to progress and eventually receive a fullness of light and truth. God, or Christ have a ‘fullness of light and truth’ hence, Christ states in Abraham that he is “I am more intelligent than they all” (Abraham 3:19). The Savior makes clear this concept in the Doctrine and Covenants, explaining his comments in Abraham:

26 The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth, and John bore record of me, saying: *He received a fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth;*

27 And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments.

28 *He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.*

29 *Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. (D&C 93:26-29)*

The “intelligence of the spirit” is not a measurable IQ or genius type of mentality. Again, the ‘*Spirit’s ability to seek for, receive and be obedient to light and truth*’ is the scriptural definition of “intelligence” and how one spirit could be “more intelligent than another.” In the verses immediately above, it is taught that Christ has a “fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth” (vs. 26) and it is explained that man cannot receive “a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments” (vs. 27). It is then explained, that those individuals who are obedient (the process of changing spirit character) will ‘receive truth and light’ until they are “glorified in truth and knoweth all things” (vs. 28). The Lord explains that the intelligence of the spirit of man, is light and truth and can receive a fullness of light and truth, by obedience. This definition of ‘intelligence’ is also discussed in Section Fifty of the Doctrine and Covenants:

24 That which is of God is light; and *he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.*

25 And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it *that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you;*

Here the Lord teaches, that the spirit that receives light, and continues in that process, will receive “more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter” until the perfect day of exaltation (vs. 24). The ability to seek for, receive and be obedient to light and truth, “will chase darkness” from the individual spirit (vs. 25). This perfect day, is explained in verse 27 of the same section, as, that time when the individual becomes “. . . possessor of all things; for all things are subject unto him, both in heaven and on the earth, the life and the light, the Spirit and the power, sent forth by the will of the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son” (D&C 50:27).

Following up on the D&C 93:26-29 above, the text continues after explaining in verse 29 that the “intelligence, or the light of truth was not created or made” explains that agency is necessary for the intelligence of the spirit to progress:

30 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.*

31 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.

32 And *every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation. (D&C 93:30-32)*

The Lord explains that it is the light and truth one receives that begins the purification process that is required for the spirit to eventually receive the glory of God. The “glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, (a fulness of) light and truth” (D&C 93:36). It is the light and truth that one embraces that will stop the onslaught of Satan against the spiritual nature of mankind as “Light and truth forsake that evil one” (D&C 93:37).

All spirits, and characters come into the world clean and free from sin with a goal to receive and retain light and truth.

38 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

39 And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers. (D&C 93:38-39)

Agency, the supreme law of progression is a requirement in the process of receiving more light and truth. Every environment or “sphere” in which the spirit of man is placed, he must be free to choose (vs. 30). The blessing or agency; and the condemnation of man, is governed by obedience to the light and truth they receive or reject when manifested to them by the Holy Ghost. Those who reject the light are under condemnation (vs. 32). Our choice to receive or reject light and truth here on earth, is part of the process we call ‘eternal progression.’ Do we chase darkness from us because of the light and truth that we are obedient too, or learn to love darkness in such a way that we cannot comprehend the light?

Joseph Smith taught in connection with spirits intelligence or it’s ability to receive light and truth which will chase darkness from itself by stating:

We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and *a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect*; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, *till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin*; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker, and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment.<sup>12</sup>

All spirits who come to the earth were prepared to receive light and truth, even though there may have been different levels of ‘valiancy’ or one man have been “more intelligent than another” because of the learned (by agency) ability to seek for, receive and be obedient to light and truth. This ability is obviously something that could have been done in the pre-earth life, as Abraham is shown that there were those “spirits” that were more intelligent than others, and these “noble and great ones” (those with a greater propensity to seek, receive and be obedient to light and truth) were chosen from among the spirits to be the leaders needed to further the salvation of man on the earth.

The nature of the spirit is to be susceptible of enlargement, and that by agency; the greater intelligence of spirit; seeks for and receives and then is obedient to the light and truth it has received, thus obedience to the Laws of God, will create a divine nature that will chase darkness from itself. The spirit thus prepared will continue to receive light and truth until obtaining a fullness of light and truth, which will naturally forsake evil having no more disposition to do evil. The receiving of this light and truth the spirit will begin to have an ‘eye single to the glory of God’ which is part and parcel of one’s obedience to light and truth.

66 Behold, that which you hear is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness—in the wilderness, because you cannot see him—my voice, because *my voice is Spirit; my Spirit is truth; truth abideth and hath no end; and if it be in you it shall abound.*

67 *And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.*

68 Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will. (D&C 88:66-68)

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<sup>12</sup> Priesthood Manual Teachings of Joseph Smith, Chapter 17.

Progression is a potential described in the attributes that define “intelligence.” All spirits who come to this earth have this ability as Joseph Smith described in these words above “All the minds and *spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement*” (Para. F above). Spirits progressed in that “sphere” in which they were placed (pre-earth) until they were not only prepared but had a need to enter another environment of probation (mortality) and testing. The physical body itself, with its limitations, and earthly desires, appetites and passions, is an environment in which the spirit is placed, (not just earth life, but the body itself) where it is required to cultivate a righteous spiritual character (See 2 Nephi 2: 29). In the process of receiving and being obedient to light and truth; The spirit housed in a physical body is moving, as it were, through this refining process of progression. In this ‘second estate’ the spirit that overcomes the flesh through ‘intelligence obedience,’ will culminate in eventually receiving a fullness of light and truth, just as Christ had done, even *before* he received his physical body. The ‘intelligence of the spirit’ needed the physical environment, the time, the limitations of a physical body to move forward or progress in the process of becoming one with God. Seeking for light and truth in the physical environment is an important aspect in this process of exaltation, as Abraham explains in his first chapter. Notice the seeking and obedience of the Patriarch:

2 And, *finding* there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, *I sought for the blessings of the fathers*, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; **(1)** *having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and (2) to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and (3) desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.* (Abraham 1:2)

The realization of the ‘Blessings of the Fathers’ or that which is called the “Covenant of Abraham” came to him because he continually sought for light and truth and was obedient to the light and truth he had received. Abraham “sought” for the blessings of the fathers” desiring to be a “greater follower of righteousness and to possess greater knowledge.” This endowment of power was a result of his spirit: seeking for, receiving, and being obedient to the light and truth he received on earth and the level of the intelligence of his spirit in the pre-earth life.

The Prophet Joseph Smith carries the thought about our earthly progression based on seeking light and truth, as he continues in his last conference address. His comments seem to refer again to Abraham Chapter Three.

G. *The first principles of man are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself.* The relationship we have with God *places us in a situation to advance in knowledge.* He has power to *institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself,* so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits.<sup>13</sup>

The Prophet teaches that the spirit of man is “self-existent with God” and the God of this world “instituted laws,” or the Gospel and plan of salvation that would allow eternal truths like justice, mercy, and grace help prepare one to “advance like himself.” This life is a place to “advance in knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence” in order to save all in the “world of spirits” as Section Ninety-three records (D&C 93:26-32). For this reason, Christ declares that He gave mankind the “*power to become the sons of God*” (John 1:12) as will be explained in another chapter.

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<sup>13</sup> TPJS, 354.

The Prophet testifies once again of the doctrines he has discussed in this, his final and last General Conference. He claims that in the words he has taught about the eternal nature of the ‘intelligence of the spirit;’ he “can also taste the spirit of eternal life” and declared that “I know it is good” and that the things he has taught were given him “by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.”

H. This is good doctrine. It tastes good. I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. They are given to me by the revelations of Jesus Christ; and I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life as they are given to me, you taste them, and I know that you believe them. You say honey is sweet, and so do I. I can also taste the spirit of eternal life. I know it is good; and when I tell you of these things which were given me by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you are bound to receive them as sweet, and rejoice more and more.<sup>14</sup>

This sermon of the Prophet Joseph Smith explains things that are not commonly taught in our Gospel Doctrine or Institute classrooms today. Probably the most important, and radical at the same time, is the doctrine that spirits are eternal; and that they were not born or created, but are as eternal or ‘co-eternal’ with God’s spirit. Second, it is taught by the Prophet that the ‘spirit, mind, and intelligence’ are the same, (See “E” above) as the Prophet uses these terms interchangeably, and in his definitions of the the spirit, Joseph connects ‘intelligence’ and ‘spirit’ by stating that the spirit has intelligence, or in his words the “intelligence of the spirit” (not composed of a separate entity) which, “intelligence” is the spirit’s ability to seek for, receive, and be obedient to light and truth.

And the Lord said unto me: These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all.  
Abraham 3:18-19

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<sup>14</sup> *TPJS*, p.355.