

Intelligences and John Taylor, LeGrand

Email conversation with Ashley

I taught High Priests yesterday. Have you read lesson 13 on the priesthood? Twice President Taylor defines priesthood in terms of "intelligences." The first 3 or 4 pages of that lesson was the most stimulating reading I have done for a long time.

See you tomorrow

LeGrand

I did notice that yesterday in priesthood, but I passed it up because I assumed it was simple verbiage for "spirit" because didn't they do that occasionally?. I guess I made a major blunder on that one, I'll go back and really read it this time. See you tomorrow,
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Ashley,
I suspect most people read it your way.

John Taylor lived during and after Orson Pratt wrote his Great First Cause, and died only a few years before BH Roberts wrote his 70's lessons which were approved by the First Presidency. In John Taylor's day people were actually talking about who and what intelligences were. Its interesting, isn't it, theology, like everything else, is primarily a question of language. It doesn't matter what John Taylor wrote, it only matters how modern readers understand his words. (The paragraph quoted below is one of the two paragraphs where he mentions intelligences.) Its that way with the scriptures as well. I have come to wonder if the scriptures actually do have a sub-text, or if they only have the language of the prophets, and there is no surface text with a second text -- a sub-text -- embedded in their words, and hidden behind the surface. But rather, I suspect, the original intended text is what we consider the sub-text, and the second text (the surface text) is an overlay that the readers put there. That is, we read the words with the definitions our culture has taught us -- or we don't really bother to read them at all because they don't really have definitions one can get a firm hold on -- which often means they have no definition at all, such as "faith," "redeem" "calling and election," and other words and phrases that we use with little or no real care. "Truth" is another. Did you notice that President Taylor said about truth. I don't suppose that you and I are the first or only ones to figure out what that word means. Yet, if you read the part of the sentence I have typed in all caps, the only way it makes sense is the way you and I understand it. Here is another example where there is no sub-text, only the words spoken by the prophet, and one either reads the words the way he meant them, or one reads them some other way

"Priesthood is the power of God."

"What is priesthood? . . . I shall briefly answer that it is the government of God, whether on the earth or in the heavens, for it is by that power, agency or principle that all things are governed on the earth and in the heavens, and by that power that all things are upheld and sustained. It governs all things-it directs all things-it sustains all things- AND HAS TO DO WITH ALL THINGS THAT GOD AND TRUTH ARE ASSOCIATED WITH. [Note: if truth is an abstract, it cannot "associate" with anything. The next thing President Taylor says is:] It is the power of God delegated to intelligences in the heavens and to men on the earth; and when we arrive in the celestial kingdom of God, we shall find the most perfect order and harmony existing, because there is the perfect pattern, the most perfect order of government carried out, and when or wherever those principles have been developed in the earth, in proportion as they have spread and been acted upon, just in that proportion have they produced blessings and salvation to the human family And when the government of God shall be more extensively adopted, and when Jesus' prayer, that he taught his disciples, is answered, and God's kingdom comes on the earth, and his will is done here as in heaven (see Matthew 6:10), then, and not till then, will universal love, peace, harmony and union prevail." (Teachings of John Taylor, p. 119)

Love you
LeGrand